

Research Article

Patient Satisfaction with Health Services at  
the Out-Patient Department Clinic of  
Wangmamyen Community Hospital, Sakeao Province, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This cross-sectional study was conducted to assess patients satisfaction with health services at the outpatient department (OPD) clinic of Wangnumyen Community Hospital, Sakaao province, Thailand, and to determine the association between satisfaction and explanatory factors. Suggestions and comments from the patients were also revealed in this study.

Using a structured questionnaire, data were derived from 236 patients consuming the OPD clinic services. Descriptive statistics were used to describe satisfaction level and explanatory variables while the association between these factors and patient satisfaction was determined by Chi-square test and/or Pearson correlation test.

The average score of patient satisfaction was 4.2 and 23.3% of the patients were highly satisfied with the health services. Patients were highly satisfied with availability of medical resources (37.3%), physical environment (36.9%), and interpersonal manner of service providers (30.9%), quality of care (24.1%), medical expenses (14.8%), and accessibility (13.9%). Female gender, being in a set payment health insurance scheme, having good attitude and surprisingly, high expectation and high transportation costs, were significantly associated with high satisfaction level. The majority of comments from patients were critical of long waiting times for seeing doctors and pharmacists, late commencement of doctor’s working time, and poor interpersonal manner of doctors and nurses.

Reinforcement of the regulation on working hours and recruitment of more doctors are recommended. Two ways communication during the provision of service and the establishment of a good communicator model are also recommended. Patient satisfaction studies should be conducted in parallel with studies on job satisfaction of service providers in order to understand the concerns that make patients dissatisfied and solve these problems accordingly.

KEY WORDS

Patient Satisfaction      Services at the OPD Clinic

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## RATIONAL AND OBJECTIVE

Living in the world of information and technology, nowadays patients are aware of their needs and rights. They know that health care facilities are established to provide satisfactory and quality health services to them. If the health care facilities fail to do so, they are considered unsuccessful in implementing their assigned tasks. Health care facility performance can be best assessed by measuring the level of patient's satisfaction. A completely satisfied patient believes that the organization has potential in understanding patient needs and demands related to health care. The World Health Organization conference, supporting health for all, held in 1990 defined future development in health to be human centered. A lot of stress has been made on investment in health, patient care and patient's right to delivery of quality health care leading to patient satisfaction (1), (2).

Thailand has been developing health care services in order to improve the quality in every aspect according to the patient needs. Many key performance indicators are used to monitor and evaluate the results of working organizations and their staffs. Patient satisfaction is the essential indicator that indicates the quality of health service at all level of health care facilities. Understanding the different influences on variation in patient satisfaction is important. To improve health care provision, managers need to be able to differentiate between a factor they control that is a part of a wider social and political context (3).

Based on the health plan at the provincial level which emphasizes patient-centered service

improvement and organization development, the rate of patient satisfaction at 80% is the minimum goal for every hospital to attain. Wangnumyen community hospital has been in the process of self-evaluation for promoting itself to be an accreditation hospital. That is why it is important to study patient satisfaction towards health services at the out patient department (OPD) clinic of Wangnumyen community hospital in Sakaeo province to provide reliable information regarding its quality of health services.

This study was conducted to assess the level of patient satisfaction with health services at the OPD clinic of Wangnumyen community hospital. The study also aimed to identify the relationship between explanatory factors and patient satisfaction, as well as to describe patient's opinions in order to draw attention to the patients' concerns and to inform the potential solution.

## METHODOLOGY

A study was conducted from 30 January to 5 February 2007 in the OPD clinic of Wangnumyen community hospital of Sakaeo province, Thailand. The study sample included patients utilized health services at the OPD clinic and available at the time of data collection. A systematic random sampling was applied for data collection. The required sample size was 227. Considering the possibility for reducing any error, 236 patients were interviewed.

Interviews with the patients were guided by a structured questionnaire that was designed by the researcher under the guidance of peer review committee and were intended to obtain information about explanatory factors and

satisfaction dimensions. Prior to the actual data collection, the questionnaire was tested and modification was made as necessary. The four interviewers also were explained beforehand in order to ensure that they have a clear understanding and unbiased approach to the data collection process. The interviews were conducted in Thai language by local staffs of the hospital during the time that patients waited for receiving medications. The explanatory factors such as predisposing characteristic (age, gender, education, and marital status), enabling resources (income, health insurance, traveling time, and transportation cost), and need factor of patients (health problem) were examined. Patients were asked about their expectation towards interpersonal manner of service providers, comfort ability of the OPD clinic, features of the OPD clinic surrounding, availability of medical resources, quality of care, and the total cost paid out of pocket for medical expense. The patient expectation was measured by using 3 rating scales, including excellent, good/ok/acceptable/affordable, and not good. Patients also were asked about their attitude on interaction of health service providers; convenience to access to health care services; features of the OPD clinic surrounding; adequacy of health service providers, facilities, equipment and medications; quality of medical care; and total cost paid out of pocket for medical services; and patients recommendation to their friends and families and themselves regarding the future utilization of services at the OPD clinic. Patient attitude was measured by using 3 rating scales: agree, undecided, and disagree. The patient satisfaction was assessed by using Likert's five

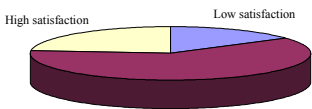
rating scales (1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=neutral, 4=satisfied, 5=very satisfied), and determined by asking 23 questions about interpersonal manner of health service providers, accessibility, physical environment, availability of medical resources, quality of care, and medical expense.

All data were analyzed by using Minitab program (version 13) after entering by employing Epidata, except data regarding suggestions and comments by patients were manually analyzed. All explanatory factors were analyzed by performing Chi-square test to identify their relationship with satisfaction level. The significance level of .05 was adopted for the statistical tests performed in this study.

RESULT

Regarding the overall satisfaction of patients towards health services at the OPD clinic of Wangnumyen community hospital, it was found that patients with high satisfaction, medium satisfaction and low satisfaction were 23.3%, 61.4% and 15.3% respectively. (Figure 1)

Figure 1 Overall satisfaction of patiend with services at the OPD clinic of Wangnamyen hostpital



As shown in figure 2 below, this study revealed that patients were highly satisfied with the availability of medical resources (37.3%), physical environment (36.9%), and interpersonal manner of health service providers (30.9%),

Medium satisfaction

quality of care (24.3%), medical expense (14.8%), and accessibility to health services at the OPD clinic (13.9%). Patients were also lowly satisfied with physical environment of the OPD clinic (31.8%). (Figure 2). Considering mean score of each component, it was found that patients seemed to be satisfied with all above mentioned component, except medical expense which patients seemed to be neutral with.

From all 236 patients, the youngest and the oldest patients were 14 and 96 years old respectively. A majority of the patients were female (72%) and only 28 % of them were male. Most of patients belonged to the married group (81.8%) while the rest of patients were in the other groups (divorced/separated, widow/widower, and single). There were 66.1% of the patients attained primary school and 20.3% of them had secondary school or higher education. Only 13.6% of patients had no education. Agriculture was the larger occupation group (38.5%). The other group, unemployed group and self-employee group were (25.4%), (14%) and (13.5%) respectively. Only 8.5% of patients were in the government and non-governmental employee group.

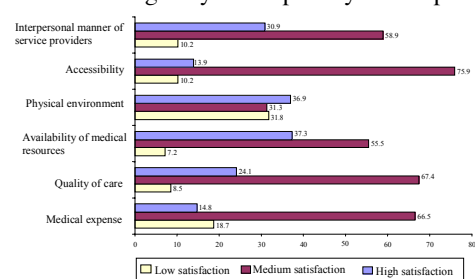
The Average family income of the patients ranged from 400–50,000 baht/month.

Most of the patients (92.4%) had family income equal or less than 16933 baht. Regarding the type of health insurance used by patients for their visit, 88.1% of the patients used UCS while 11.9% of the patients used other schemes such as CSMBS,

SSS and self-payment. More than half (58%) of the patients spent time 30–60 minutes for traveling to get medical care at the OPD clinic, and 34.3% of them spent less than 30 minutes for traveling. A majority of the patients (85.6%) had no problem with the traveling time while 14.4% of them had the problem. In this study, 224 patients spent money for their transportation to the hospital, and 77.7% of them spent equal and less than 88 baht for the transportation while the rest of the patients spent more than 88 baht. Among all of them, 78.2% of the patients did not have problem with the transportation cost while 21.2% of them encountered the problem.

A majority of the patients (87.3%) answered that they had underlying diseases or previous health problem. Only 12.7% patients had neither previous health problem nor underlying diseases. There were 68.2% of the patients used to visit or admit in any hospital before while 31.8% of them never had. Patients visited the OPD clinic because of acute health problems, chronic health problems and others were 42.4%, 38.5% and 19.1 respectively. (Table 1)

**Figure 2** Satifiction of patiens with health services at th OPD clinic of Wangnamyen hostpital bysix components



**Table 1** Socio-demographic characteristics of the patients

| Characteristics          | Frequency<br>(n=236) | Percent |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---------|
| Age (years)              |                      |         |
| <29                      | 28                   | 11.9    |
| 30-39                    | 42                   | 17.8    |
| 40-49                    | 55                   | 23.3    |
| 50-59                    | 44                   | 18.6    |
| >60                      | 67                   | 28.4    |
| Min=14    Max= 96        |                      |         |
| Mean =48.91   SD = 16.59 |                      |         |
| Gender                   |                      |         |
| Male                     | 66                   | 28.0    |
| Female                   | 170                  | 72.0    |
| Marital Status           |                      |         |
| Single                   | 17                   | 7.2     |
| Married                  | 193                  | 81.8    |
| Divorced/separated/widow | 26                   | 11.0    |
| Education level          |                      |         |
| No education             | 32                   | 13.6    |
| Primary school           | 156                  | 66.1    |
| Secondary and higher     | 48                   | 20.3    |
| Occupation               |                      |         |
| Agriculture              | 91                   | 38.5    |
| GOV & NGO employee       | 20                   | 8.5     |
| Self-employee            | 32                   | 13.6    |
| Unemployed               | 33                   | 14.0    |
| Others                   | 60                   | 25.4    |
| Income (baht)            |                      |         |
| 400-16933                | 218                  | 92.4    |
| 16934-33466              | 13                   | 5.5     |
| 33467-50000              | 5                    | 2.1     |
| Min = 400    Max = 50000 |                      |         |
| Mean = 6402   SD = 7103  |                      |         |
| Health insurance         |                      |         |
| UCS                      | 208                  | 88.1    |
| Others                   | 28                   | 11.9    |

**Table 1** Socio-demographic characteristics of the patients (Cont.)

| Characteristics  | Frequency<br>(n=236) | Percent |
|--|----------------------|---------|
| Traveling cost (n=224)                                   |                      |         |
| 10-88    baht  | 174                  | 77.7    |
| 89-167   baht  | 34                   | 15.2    |
| 168-246   baht   | 9                    | 4.0     |
| 247-325   baht   | 5                    | 2.2     |
| 326-400   baht   | 2                    | 0.9     |
| Min = 10   Max = 400                                     |                      |         |
| Mean = 68.90   SD = 61.68                                |                      |         |
| Traveling cost problem                                   |                      |         |
| Yes  | 50                   | 21.2    |
| No   | 186                  | 78.8    |
| Traveling time (minute)                                  |                      |         |
| <30  | 81                   | 34.3    |
| 30-60  | 137                  | 58.0    |
| >60  | 18                   | 7.7     |
| Traveling time problem                                   |                      |         |
| Yes  | 34                   | 14.4    |
| No   | 202                  | 85.6    |
| Health problem    Previous health problem/<br>experience |                      |         |
| Yes  | 206                  | 87.3    |
| No   | 30                   | 12.7    |
| Previous visit/admission to hospital                     |                      |         |
| Yes  | 161                  | 68.2    |
| No   | 75                   | 31.8    |
| Current problem  |                      |         |
| Acute health problems                                    | 100                  | 42.4    |
| Chronic health problems                                  | 91                   | 38.5    |
| Others   | 45                   | 19.1    |

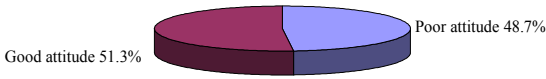
In this study, it was found that more than half (58.9%) of the patients highly expected and less than half (41.1%) of them had low expectation towards health services at the OPD clinic of Wangnumyen hospital. (Figure 3)

**Figure 3** Overall expectation of the patients towards health services at the OPD clinic of Wangnamyen community Hospital



It was also found that more than half of patients (51.3%) had good attitude while less than half of them (48.7%) had poor attitude towards health services at the OPD clinic of Wangnumyen hospital. (Figure 4)

**Figure 4** Overall attitude of the patients towards health services at the OPD clinic of Wangnamyen community Hospital



In this study, females (24.1%) were more satisfied than males (9.1%), and the female gender had significant association with high satisfaction level The patients used UCS (19.2%) were less satisfied than those used other schemes (25%), and being in a set payment health insurance scheme was significantly associated with high satisfaction level. Regarding transportation cost, it was found that those who paid transportation costs more than 88 baht (34.0%) for trav-

eling to visit the hospital were more satisfied than those who paid less than 88 baht (15.5%). The high transportation costs had significant association with high satisfaction level. It was also found that the patients with high expectation (29.5%) had higher satisfaction level than those whose expectation was low, and having high expectation was significantly association with high satisfaction level. The patients with good attitude were more satisfied than those with low attitude, and having good attitude was significantly associated with high satisfaction level ( $r = 0.18$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .006$ ).

In this study, other factors such as age, marital status, education, income, occupation etc. were not found to be associated with satisfaction level of patients.

**Table 2** The association between explanatory factors and satisfaction level

| Explanatory               |           | Satisfaction level |           |       | P-value |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-------|---------|
| factor                    | Low       | Medium             | High      |       |         |
| 1.Gender group            |           |                    |           |       |         |
| Male                      | 12 (18.2) | 48 (72.7)          | 6 (9.1)   | .026  |         |
| Female                    | 32 (18.8) | 97 (57.0)          | 41 (24.1) |       |         |
| 2.Health insurance scheme |           |                    |           |       |         |
| UCS                       | 33 (15.9) | 135 (64.9)         | 40 (19.2) | .004  |         |
| Others                    | 11 (39.3) | 10 (35.7)          | 7 (25.0)  |       |         |
| 3.Transportation cost     |           |                    |           |       |         |
| < 88 ฿                    | 35 (20.1) | 112 (64.4)         | 27 (15.5) | .015  |         |
| >88 ฿                     | 8 (16.0)  | 25 (50.0)          | 17 (34.0) |       |         |
| 4.Expectation             |           |                    |           |       |         |
| High                      | 16 (11.5) | 82 (59.0)          | 41 (29.5) | .0001 |         |
| Low                       | 28 (28.9) | 63 (64.9)          | 6 (6.2)   |       |         |

(9.1) .026  
24.1)  
  
19.2) . 004  
25.0)  
  
15.5) .015  
34.0)  
  
29.5) .0001  
(6.2)

There were 74.6% of the patients provided their comments for improving the quality of health services at the OPD clinic. Mostly, each patient focused on more than one point of view. The comments were mostly related the long waiting time for seeing doctors and pharmacists (30.1%), the late commencement of working hours of doctors (22.2%); the poor interpersonal manner of nurses and doctors (17.6%); the small size of OPD clinic’s space and billboard of hospital’s name, car park, and the cleanliness of space and toilets (14.8%); the quality of physical examination by physicians and quality of drugs (6.2%); the quantity of toilets, especially toilets for disabled and elderly people; and chairs at the waiting area (5.7%); and the operation time of fan and/or air-condition up to the whole day during the hot season; using microphone to announce patients and turning on television during the afternoon working hours (5.7%). Patients also emphasized on the need of specialties in the areas of pediatric, eye, and ENT care (15.3%).

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in the hospital during the office working hours and the interviewers for this study were the nurses of the hospital so that these could inevitably influence patients’ answers.

Regarding satisfaction level, it was found that 23.3% of the patients were highly satisfied and 61.4% of them were moderately satisfied. Only 15.3% of patients were lowly satisfied with health services at the OPD clinic of Wangnumyen Community Hospital. The proportion of high satisfaction level of this study was lower than the

high satisfaction proportion (54%) of the study conducted by Anjum J. (4), and the satisfaction level (52%) found by the study of Tangmankongworakoon. (5). Moreover, the satisfaction level of this study was much lower when compared with the finding of survey conducted by Wangnumyen Community Hospital, in which it was found that the overall satisfaction level received from the patients at its OPD clinic in April 2005 and April 2006 were 75.68% and 81.7% consecutively (6), (7). The different findings between this study and other studies could be explained by the different classification of satisfaction level, time of study, hospital setting, and socio-cultural setting. For instance, this study determined high satisfaction level by using mean score more than 4.57 as the cut-off point which is equal 91.4% of total score while another study determined it by using mean score of 4 which is equal 80% of total score as the cut-off point (5). As a result, this study found the proportion of high satisfaction lower than that of another study due to its higher criteria of satisfaction level.

Considering satisfaction level by component as shown in Figure 2, it could be implied that the patients were more satisfied with availability of medical resources and interpersonal manner of service providers, but they were more concerned about accessibility, medical expense, quality of care and physical environment of the OPD clinic.

According to the result of this study female patients (24.1%) were more satisfied with health services than male patients (9.1%), and female gender was significantly associated with high satisfaction level. This finding was consistent with

the result of Partha P.R's study (8), (9). Patients spent the transportation cost more than 88 baht (34%) were more satisfied than those who spent less (15.9%), and the high transportation cost had a significant association with high satisfaction level. This result supported Levoie et al who mentioned that a further factor is predicted by "cognitive consistency theory", according to which patients are likely to report they are satisfied as a way of justifying the time and effort they themselves have invested in their treatment at the unit (10). This could also reflect the willingness of the patients to get highly satisfied services even though they tried very hard to access to health services in terms of more fare spent for transportation. (Table 2)

In this study, the result showed that the patients with high expectation (58.9%) were more satisfied than those with low expectation (41.1%), and having high expectation was significantly associated with high satisfaction level of patients (Table 2). This indicated that the patients got better health care services than what they expected. The finding of this study might be related to the hypothesis that the more a doctor's performance meets a patient's expectation, the more satisfied the patient will be with the physician's services (11). However, this finding was inconsistent with the finding of previous study, in which it was found that patients with lower expectations tend to be more satisfied (12).

The finding of this study revealed that patients with good attitude were more satisfied than those with poor attitude, and having good attitude

were significantly associated with high satisfaction level. This finding supported Linder-Pelz (1982) who defined patient satisfaction as an expression of an attitude, an affective response and as the individual's positive evaluations of distinct dimension of health care (13). And it was consistent with the previous study which revealed that attitude was the associating factor to the satisfaction level (5)

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Reinforcement of the regulation on working hours and recruitment of more doctors are recommended for improving the long waiting time. Two ways communication with politeness and friendliness during the provision of service to patients and the establishment of good communicator model are also recommended in order to increase patient satisfaction level. Considering health service providers as internal customers, patient satisfaction study should be conducted in parallel with the satisfaction of service providers with their job in order to better understand the concerns of the service providers that make patients dissatisfied so that these concerns can be solved accordingly.

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ความพึงพอใจต่อการบริการทางสุขภาพของผู้ป่วยนอกในโรงพยาบาลวังน้ำเย็น  
จังหวัดสระแก้ว

นี เน็ต  
สัน ทัด เสริมศรี  
จิราพร ชมพิกุล

บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์การวิจัยครั้งนี้คือ ศึกษาความพึงพอใจของผู้ป่วยนอกในโรงพยาบาลชุมชนวังน้ำเย็น จังหวัดสระแก้ว และศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างปัจจัยที่มีความสัมพันธ์ต่อความพึงพอใจของผู้ป่วย ต่อการรับบริการ วิธีการศึกษาใช้วิธีการวิจัยสำรวจ โดยใช้แบบสอบถามที่สร้างขึ้นเพื่อการศึกษาครั้งนี้ โดยเฉพาะ ทำการสัมภาษณ์ผู้ป่วยนอก จำนวน 236 คน ที่มารับการตรวจรักษา ณ โรงพยาบาล วิธีการวิเคราะห์ใช้สถิติพรรณนาในการอธิบายระดับความพึงพอใจ และสถิติไครส์แควร์ และ ประสิทธิภาพสัมพัทธ์เพียร์สันในการศึกษาหาความสัมพันธ์ของปัจจัยต่าง ๆ ในรอบการศึกษา

ดัชนีวัดความพึงพอใจของผู้ป่วยพิจารณาจากมาตรวัดที่เป็นช่วงวัดมีคะแนนตั้งแต่ 1 ถึง 5 ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ผู้ป่วยมีความพึงพอใจต่อสถานบริการในระดับ 4.2 หรือร้อยละ 23.3 ของ ผู้ป่วยมีความพึงพอใจในระดับสูงมาก เมื่อพิจารณาความพึงพอใจของผู้ป่วยโดยรวม พบว่า ร้อยละ 37.3 มีความพึงพอใจในสิ่งแวดล้อมทางกายภาพของสถานบริการ ร้อยละ 30.9 มีความพึงพอใจ ด้านกิจกรรมยาของผู้ให้บริการ ร้อยละ 24.1 มีความพึงพอใจคุณภาพการบริการ ร้อยละ 14.8 มีความ พึงพอใจด้านค่าใช้จ่ายในการดูแลรักษาของสถานบริการ และร้อยละ 13.9 มีความพึงพอใจสถานบริการ

ปัจจัยต่าง ๆ ที่มีความสัมพันธ์กับความพึงพอใจ ได้แก่ ปัจจัยเรื่องเพศ กล่าวคือ ผู้ป่วยหญิง การมีบัตรประกันสุขภาพ ทักษะคติของผู้ป่วย ความคาดหวังของผู้ป่วย และค่าใช้จ่ายในการเดินทาง ปัจจัยที่เป็นตัวแปรอิสระดังกล่าวมีความสัมพันธ์กับความพึงพอใจ ความเห็นที่เสนอแนะในการ พัฒนาการบริการซึ่งผู้ป่วย กล่าวถึงคือ เวลาที่ยาวนานในการรอพบแพทย์ เวลาบริการของแพทย์ และ กิจกรรมารยาทของบุคคลผู้ให้บริการ สำหรับข้อเสนอแนะในการศึกษาวิจัยคือ ควรมีการศึกษาความ พึงพอใจของผู้ให้บริการเพื่อใช้ประกอบการปรับปรุงการบริการที่ผู้ป่วยประสบอยู่

คำสำคัญ

ความพึงพอใจของผู้ป่วย                      การให้บริการผู้ป่วยนอก

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