

## ORIGINAL PAPER

## Evaluation of Satisfaction with Nursing Care of Patients Hospitalized in Surgical Clinics of Different Hospitals

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### Abstract

Today, two main approaches are prominent in the assessment of care quality. The first is the determination of care standards, and the other approach for quality-guarantee is the method of monitoring the patient satisfaction. The aim of this study is to determine the satisfaction levels of patients, who stayed in surgery clinics in different hospitals, with nursing care.

The sample of the study consisted of 972 patients who accepted to participate in the research, were able to communicate, 18 of age and above and literate. The data were collected through “The Personal Information Form” and “The Newcastle Scale of Satisfaction with Nursing”. The data were assessed through percentage distribution, t-test, One-Way ANOVA test, Man-Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis variance analysis.

The satisfaction levels of the patients in the research group have differed according to their age, marital status, educational background, profession, the hospital in which the patients stay, previous hospital experience and whether or not they had companions with them.

It became evident that patients were generally satisfied with nursing services, however the satisfaction levels of patients staying in private hospitals were more than those of patients staying in public hospitals.

**Keywords:** Nursing services, satisfaction, patient

### Introduction

Satisfaction is a complex concept which is related to several factors such as lifestyle, previous experiences, future expectations and individual and social values (Acaroğlu et al., 2007). Patient satisfaction, on the other hand, is defined to be a result of each patient's perception of the care designed for that patient to eliminate his/her problems. Patient satisfaction, in most countries, is considered to be an indicator of the quality of healthcare and an important component of the care (Lochoro, 2004). In addition, it provides a feed-back for the evaluation of the nursing care and determination of the quality. Thus, assessing patient satisfaction is beneficial and necessary (Uzun, 2001; Uzun, 2003). The American Nurses Association defines patient satisfaction among the seven indicators defined for healthcare organizations (Demir and Eşer, 2005). Since satisfaction may differ according to various

situations and factors; the assessment of satisfaction and the determination of factors affecting satisfaction level, fixing the situation, defining the priorities and making right plans are scientifically important (Zahr Kurdaki, 1991). Defining satisfaction levels is also important in terms of planning and assessing the healthcare, and providing higher quality service in line with the expectations (Schmidt, 2003). The satisfaction of patients with the nursing care provided during their stay in the hospital is the most important factor affecting the satisfactions with the entire hospital services (Yılmaz, 2001). If the patient is satisfied with the service, she will be more likely to cooperate and follow the suggestions with confidence. High patient satisfaction enables the service providers to provide sufficient counseling and effective and continuous service. Health workers' attitudes and behaviors are of high importance for patient

satisfaction and for the service to reach its goals. Being respectful to and gentle with patients and giving them correct information are the characteristics of a successful service providing (Fulya and Berk, 1995).

Regularly assessing the patient satisfaction with valid and reliable assessment tools will be effective in increasing the quality of nursing services by paving the way for the implementation of necessary regulations in nursing applications in line with patient expectations (Köşgeroğlu et al., 2005). Patient satisfaction is important not only to increase the quality of nursing services, but also, as indicated in the literature, for the patient to participate more in his/her care and make positive contributions to the recovering process (Jacox et al., 1997). In the studies conducted so far, a positive correlation has been found between the patient satisfaction with nursing care and the satisfaction with hospital services (Al-Mailam, 2005). It is stated that the most important factor influencing patients' satisfaction with hospital care is their satisfaction with the nursing care (Tzeng, 2002).

The aim of this study is to determine the satisfaction levels of patients staying in surgery clinics with nursing care.

### **Materials and Methods**

The research has been planned to be descriptive and conducted accordingly. The population of the study consisted of adult patients; who were suitable with the criteria of the study and stayed in the surgery clinics of The Atatürk University Süleyman Demirel Medical Center Yakutiye and Aziziye Research Hospitals, The Ministry of Health Numune Hospital, The Social Security Organization Hospital and The Private Şifa Hospital in the period of November 2004 – February 2005.

Since the entire population was taken as the sample group, no sampling method was used. The sample of the study consisted of 972 patients who accepted to participate in the research.

The criteria to include individuals in the study are as follows; Stayed in the hospital for at least two nights, 18 of age and above, able to speak, read and understand Turkish, and able to cooperate with the researcher, conscious, not having severe pain.

The identifying characteristics of the patient and factors that could influence the satisfaction level constituted the independent variables of the study, and the scores obtained from the Scale of Experiences Related to the Nursing Care and the Scale of Satisfaction with the Nursing Care constituted the dependent variables of the study.

### **Collection of The Data**

The data were collected through “The Personal Information Form” and “The Newcastle Scale of Satisfaction With Nursing”.

### **Data Collection Tools**

#### **The Personal Information Form**

The Personal Information Form, consisted of 22 questions, was prepared by the researcher in line with the literature and to reveal the identifying characteristics of the patient and factors that could influence the satisfaction level (Uzun, 2003; Bölükbaşı and Türköz, 2002; Griffiths, 1995).

#### **The Newcastle Scale of Satisfaction with Nursing (NSSN)**

The Newcastle Scale of Satisfaction with Nursing was used to assess the satisfaction levels of patients with the nursing care. NSSN, consists of two scales, namely, the Scale of Experiences Related to the Nursing Care (SENC) and the Scale of Satisfaction with the Nursing Care (SSNC) (Uzun, 2003).

NSSN is an assessment tool which can be used to compare patients' experiences and satisfaction levels between patient rooms, clinics, clinic managers and hospitals; to make Longitudinal comparisons (before and after a planned or unplanned activity); to control the standards and to assess the foreseen developments after the nursing care. The scales were of a character that can be implemented by individuals by themselves and can be applied to literate adults. The Scale of Experiences Related to the Nursing Care and the Scale of Satisfaction with the Nursing Care are used together to totally assess the nursing care (Uzun, 2004; Walsh and Walsh, 1999). The validity and reliability of the scale was checked by Uzun in the study conducted on 280 patients in 2003 in Turkey. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient of The Scale of Experiences Related to the Nursing Care was determined as 0.75 and that of the Scale of Satisfaction with the Nursing Care was determined as 0.94 (Uzun, 2003). In this study,

The Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient of The Scale of Experiences Related to the Nursing Care was determined as 0.87 and that of the Scale of Satisfaction with the Nursing Care was determined as 0.96.

#### **The characteristics of SENC:**

SENC has been developed in order to assess the patients' experiences related to nursing services during their stay in hospital. In this scale, patients are asked to express their opinions about nursing services. SENC is a 7-point likert type scale consisting of 26 items. In this scale, for neutrality, 15 items were asked with positive expressions and 11 items were asked with positive ones (Uzun, 2003).

#### **The characteristics of SSNC;**

With SSNC, the satisfaction of the patient with the nursing care during his/her stay in the patient room is assessed. Patients identify their satisfaction with the nursing care through a 5-point likert scale consisting of 19 items. The score assessment is conducted by aggregating the points of all items and then converting them to percentage values. Thus, a total score of 100 means that the experiences related to the nursing care are at the best level (Uzun, 2003).

#### **Results**

It was determined that 47.8 % of 972 patients are in the age group of 40-64 years and most of the patients are male (59.1%), married (83.2%), literate-primary school graduates (71.2%), and most of them have social security (95.9%). In addition, 36.2% of the patients are housewives, 41.4% of them have low monthly income and more than half of the patients (52.4%) reside in cities. It was also found that 42.0% of the patients stayed in Research Hospitals and 41.0% of them stayed in general surgery clinics. 48.6% of the patients stayed in four or more person rooms, 76.4% of them had companions with them, and most of these companions (83.3%) always stayed with the patient. It was found that 56.4% of the patients are independent and 17.4% of them are dependent, and 51.9% of them stayed in hospital 8-15 days. As for the distribution of the patients' opinions about the nursing care; 97% of the patients stated that there was not a specific nurse responsible for their care, and while 45.3% of them evaluated the nursing care to be good, 0.8% of them stated that the nursing care was very poor. When the distribution of Satisfaction

Point Averages according to the patients' identifying characteristics in table 1 is examined, the difference between the Point Average of Experiences Related to the Nursing Care and the Point Average of Satisfaction with the Nursing Care according to the patients' age groups, marital statuses, educational backgrounds and professions was found statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). When the patients' satisfaction point averages according to their conditions in the hospital are examined, it becomes clear that the satisfaction levels of the patients stayed in Şifa Hospital are higher than those of the patients stayed in the Research Hospital, Numune Hospital and The Social Security Organization Hospital (SSOH), and the difference between the hospitals in which the patients stayed and the Point Average of Experiences Related to the Nursing Care and the Point Average of Satisfaction with the Nursing Care was found statistically significant ( $F = 17.151$   $p < 0.01$ ;  $F = 20.732$   $p < 0.01$ ).

The difference between the Point Average of Experiences Related to the Nursing Care and the Point Average of Satisfaction with the Nursing Care according to their genders, monthly incomes and the durations of their stay in the hospital was not found statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

#### **Discussion**

It became evident that the majority of those patients who were satisfied with the nursing services were 65 years of age and above, and the patients' satisfactions with the nursing services according to age group were found to be statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). The studies conducted so far on this issue support the findings of this study (3,18, 19, 20). It can be concluded that older patients' expectations are lower, since they were found to be more satisfied with the nursing services. As for the influence of gender on the satisfaction with nursing care, no significant difference was found between satisfaction levels of male and female patients with the nursing care ( $p > 0.05$ ). Similarly, in many studies analyzed patient satisfaction, no statistically significant difference has been found between the satisfaction with nursing services and gender (Lochoro, 2004; Bölükbaşı and Türköz, 2002; Doğan et al., 2004). It is widely accepted that no stable correlation exists between gender and satisfaction and many studies have not found such a correlation.

**Table 1: The Comparison of The Point Averages of Patients' Characteristics and Their Perception of Nursing Care**

Characteristics	N=972	%	The Newcastle Scale of Satisfaction with Nursing			
			SENC* X±SS	Significance	SSNC** X±SS	Significance
<b>Age</b>						
19-39	327	33.7	69.79±10.70	F=11.469	58.55±12.81	F=13.784
40-64	465	47.8	72.84±9.99	sd=2	62.89±12.10	sd=2
65 and above	180	18.5	73.64±10.09	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>	63.11±12.10	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>
<b>Gender</b>				t=-1.596		t=-.634
Female	398	40.9	71.33±10.32	sd=970	61.17±12.72	sd=970
Male	574	59.1	72.40±10.38	p>0.05	61.68±12.36	p>0.05
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Married	809	83.2	72.50±10.23	F=6.930	62.23±12.29	F=8.973
Single	141	14.5	69.59±10.95	sd=2	57.57±12.55	sd=2
Divorced	22	2.3	67.45±8.44	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>	58.80±15.41	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>
<b>Educational Background</b>						
Primary School	692	71.2	72.51±9.99	F=4.715	62.31±11.75	F=6.279
Secondary School	210	21.6	71.18±10.77	sd=2	59.94±13.52	sd=2
High School- University	70	7.2	68.87±12.07	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>	57.75±15.41	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>
<b>Occupation</b>						
Civil servant	67	6.9	69.18±10.82		57.81±15.33	
Worker	91	9.4	70.74±11.27	F=3.978	59.01±12.44	F=4.334
Retired	125	12.9	74.91±9.92	sd=6	63.81±11.97	sd=6
Self employed	102	10.4	73.24±10.04	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>	62.72±12.36	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>
Housewife	352	36.2	71.26±10.09		61.28±12.04	
Student	40	4.1	69.20±11.40		56.15±13.26	
Farther	195	20.1	72.78±9.99		63.16±11.92	
<b>Hospital</b>						
Resarch Hospital	408	42.0	71.45±9.81	F=17.151	61.17±12.48	F=20.732
Numune Hospital	286	29.4	71.08±10.27	sd=3	61.29±11.56	sd=3
SSOH	236	24.3	71.99±10.84	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>	59.71±11.92	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>
Şifa Hospital	42	4.3	82.81±7.19		75.61±13.93	
<b>A Specific Nurse Responsible For Patients</b>				M-WU=		M-WU=
No	943	97.0	70.01±10.41	11980.500	61.48±12.52	12578.000
I'm not sure	29	3.0	70.29±8.73	p>0.05	61.16±12.17	p>0.05
<b>Income Status</b>						
Less income than expenditures	402	41.4	71.88±9.28	F=.170	61.91±11.45	F=.641
Equal income and expenditures	287	29.5	72.25±11.39	sd=2	61.51±12.85	sd=2
More incomethan expenditures	283	29.1	71.78±10.75	p>0.05	60.81±13.56	p>0.05

\*SENC: Scale of Experiences Related to the Nursing Care

\*\* SSNC: Scale of Satisfaction with the Nursing Care

It was found that married patients' satisfaction levels are higher than those of widows and divorced patients ( $p < 0.01$ ). It can be concluded that the social support and care that married patients receive from their spouses and children might decrease their care needs and expectation levels.

A statistically significant difference was found between the patients' satisfaction levels with the nursing care according to their educational backgrounds ( $p < 0.01$ ). It was determined that literate-primary school graduates are more satisfied with nursing services compared to college graduates. Parallel to this finding, many studies have found an inversely proportional relationship between education and patient satisfaction (Uzun, 2001; Özbaşaran, 2001; Cihangiroğlu, 1996). As the educational level goes up, the satisfaction with nursing services declines. It can be concluded through this finding that higher educational level increases the expectations from the caring functions of nursing services.

A statistically significant difference was found between dependency statuses of patients and their SENC average points ( $p < 0.05$ ). It can be thought that dependent patients have more needs and thus nurses allocate more time and provide more care to them.

When the patients were asked to assess the nursing care, 45.3% of them characterized it to be "good", 37.7% "very good", and 0.8% characterized it to be "very poor", and a statistically significant difference was found between them ( $p < 0.01$ ). In a similar fashion, Kardeş's (Kardeş, 1994) study has determined the percentage of those patients who characterized the nurses' attitudes towards them as "good" and "excellent" to be 65.3%.

The difference between the patients' satisfaction levels and the hospitals in which they stayed was found statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The satisfaction point average of the patients stayed in the Private Şifa Hospital was found to be  $75.61 \pm 13.93$ , and it is more than the other hospitals. In the study of Eti Aslan et al. (Eti Aslan et al., 1990), it has been indicated that the 98.0% percent of patients stayed in Training Hospital, and 79.0% of patients stayed in Public Hospital were satisfied with the nursing services.

Among the reasons of higher satisfaction level in the Private Şifa Hospital might be the lower number of patients, higher number of nurses, better physical resources, and higher information provided to patients about their diseases.

When the patients were asked to provide suggestions to better nursing care, 37.5% of them have suggested nurses to care for them more and understand the patient psychology, and 28.4% of them have suggested that the nurses should be more tolerant and respectful. In the study of Özmen (Özmen, 1999), 36.1% of the patients demanded more care, 36.1% of them demanded friendliness and compassion, 8.3% of them demanded explanatory information and more accurate timing in the distribution of medicines, and 2.9% of them demanded more carefulness. In addition, in the study of Elibol et al. (Elibol et al., 1998), 90% of the patients demanded friendliness from nurses, and 1.7% of the them stated that the nurses need to receive psychological support. In the study conducted by Bölükbaşı (Bölükbaşı and Türköz, 2002), it was determined that 41.2% of the patients demanded more friendliness and compassion and 22.5% of them demanded explanatory information about their conditions from the nurses. These findings demonstrate that nurses' non-verbal expressions as well as verbal ones are important in their communications with patients, and they need to inform patients about their practices.

A statistically significant difference has been found between the Point Average of Experiences Related to the Nursing Care and the Point Average of Satisfaction with the Nursing Care according to the patients' ages, marital statuses, educational backgrounds, and professions, the hospitals or clinics they stayed in, whether or not they had companions and their dependency conditions. As for the distribution of patients' opinions to better the nursing care, 37,5% of them stated that nurses should care for the patients and understand their psychologies more, and 1,2% of them stated that nurses should work in more sterilized environments.

In line with the findings of the research, the possible suggestions for better healthcare are: institutions to determine the number of nurses in clinics according to the ideal nurse/patient ratio, to periodically conduct studies assessing patients' satisfaction levels with nursing care, and to

improve the service parts that are not approved of.

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