

PATIENT SATISFACTION AT THE MUHIMBILI NATIONAL HOSPITAL IN DAR ES SALAAM,
TANZANIA

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Abstract

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Objectives: Patients are the primary beneficiaries of the services and care that hospitals provide. The Patient Satisfaction study examined the extent to which patients at the Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH) were satisfied with the services and care they received at MNH. This was part of a baseline study that sought to determine the level of performance of the hospital before massive restructuring, reform, and renovations were undertaken.

Methodology: Exit interviews were the main research method used to determine patient satisfaction. Patients were interviewed as they were leaving the OPD clinics, laboratory, X-ray, pharmacy and inpatient wards.

Results: The study found that most patients were satisfied with the services and care they received. This high level of satisfaction must be viewed within the context of a hierarchical public health care delivery system, with MNH at the apex. The services and care MNH provides can only be excellent compared to that provided by lower level health facilities. Indeed, patients covered by this study perceived the services provided by MNH as superior, and this was reflected in the high level of satisfaction they reported. Some patients expressed dissatisfaction with specific aspects of the services that they received. They were particularly dissatisfied with long waiting times before receiving services, the high costs of treatment and investigations charged at MNH, poor levels of hygiene in the wards, and negative attitudes of staff towards patients.

Conclusion: Although only a small proportion of patients expressed dissatisfaction with these aspects of the services provided, they are significant in that they constitute a call for action by the MNH management to encourage the health personnel to embrace a new staff- patient relationship ethos, in which the patient is viewed as a customer.

Conflict of interest: the authors declare no conflict of interest regarding this study.

Keywords: patient satisfaction, reform, Muhimbili National Hospital, referral hospital, Tanzania