



Patients' Perception of Services Rendered at the Eye Clinic of a Public Tertiary Health Center in Uyo, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study determined patients' perception of services rendered at the eye department of a public tertiary health center in Uyo. Six research questions and corresponding hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted ex post facto research design. Subjects studied were 303 in which a questionnaire titled "Patients' Perception of Services rendered at Tertiary Eye Health Center (PPSTEHC) was used to get information for analysis. The face validation of the instrument was provided by three experts in the department of the authors. A reliability coefficient, analyzed with Cronbach Alpha, of 0.84 was realized when the instrument was trial-tested with 25 patients at the eye department of another eye facility where no subject was recruited for the main study. Related t-test was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Findings of the study showed that there was satisfaction of patients with registration processes, environment, doctors' services, nurses' services, pharmacy and waiting time. It was concluded that public health institutions can provide satisfactory services to clients if adequate human and material resources are available.

Keywords: Clinic, Eye, Perception, Satisfaction, Services

Introduction

In recent years, patients' perspectives have played an increasingly important role in health care. Patient-centered care is health care that is responsive to patients' wants, needs, and preferences and has been the trend of modern health care. Evaluation of patients' perception of eye care services can be viewed as an opportunity to 'consult' with clients about their experiences. It may provide the only means for patients to express concerns about the services received, and to express their views about new services that can be added or improved upon (Laine & Davidoff, 1996; Olawoye, 2008; Afolabi & Erhun, 2003).

Perception evaluation can address the reliability of services or the assurance that services are provided consistently and dependably; the responsiveness of services or the willingness of providers to meet patients' needs; the courtesy of providers; and the security of services, including the security of records (Ofili & Ofovwe, 2005; Okoro, 2011). Lebour (1993) opined that specific questions may assess patients' views about the physical setting of services, the helpfulness of support staff, information resources, the competence of counsellors, the costs of service, the relevance of services to their needs, the accessibility of services, waiting times for service components, frequency of appointments, time spent with counsellor, the 'humanness' of



services and the effectiveness of services in ameliorating their problems. Surveys on perception of patients assessing public eye health facilities are limited. This poses serious challenges when information is required for eye care developmental plan. Therefore, it is the thrust of this study to determine patients' perception of services rendered in one of the high-volume government eye care centers in Nigeria to add to existing knowledge on this subject.

Statement of the problem

According to Sheppard (1999), determinants of quality of patient care include quality of infrastructure, quality of training, competence of the personnel and efficiency of operational systems. Improvement in quality of care constitutes part of the day-to-day duty of an eye health facility. The patient is the most important person in a medical care system. Understanding the patients' perception of services received is essential as the parameters important to the patient may be different from that of the eye health provider. Patients being the end-user of health care services, overall satisfaction (or otherwise) with the services offered will determine their continued use or otherwise of the facility. It has been noted that both medical aspects of care (such as treatment outcome, trained personnel, use of newer technologies) and non-technical care (such as kindness of the nurse and cleanliness) are important determinants of patients' overall satisfaction with the care received (Woo & Hanjoon, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to determine patients' perception of services rendered at the Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital. Specifically, the study sought to state the following objectives

1. To determine the level of satisfaction of eyes patients with the registration process at the Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital
2. To determine the level of satisfaction of eyes patients with hospital environment of Uyo Teaching Hospital.
3. To assess the degree of satisfaction with services rendered by eye doctors at Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital
4. To examine the extent of satisfaction with nursing services at Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital
5. To examine the extent of satisfaction with pharmacy services
6. To determine the patients' satisfaction with waiting time Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

Null Hypotheses

This study was guided by six null hypotheses based on the outlined specific objectives

1. There is no satisfaction with the registration process at the Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital
2. There is no satisfaction with the hospital environment of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital.
3. There is no satisfaction with the services rendered by eye doctors at Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital



4. There is no satisfaction with the nursing services at Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital
5. There is no satisfaction with the pharmacy services at University of Uyo Teaching Hospital
6. There is no satisfaction with waiting time at the Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria. With a landmass of 490km², Uyo lies between 4° 59’N and 7° 47’ E in the tropical rain forest belt of south-south Nigeria. The eye facility is a public tertiary care center that provides services to residents in Akwa-Ibom state and its environs. Most of the subjects interviewed could speak and write English while an interpreter assisted the author for a few illiterate respondents.

Ex-post facto design method was used. Ex-post facto research design is a variant of observational research design where the information sought already exists in the population and the researcher needs no experimental testing. The information sought in this instance was on patients’ perception which respondents already had and needed no experimentation. The study population involved patients who consented during the study period. The instrument for data collection was a pre-tested interviewer-administered questionnaire which had content validity, internal validity and a Cronbach Alpha reliability of 0.84. The questionnaire used was titled “Patients’ Perception of Services rendered at Tertiary Eye Health Center (PPSTHEC)”. It was designed to elicit responses based on the dependent and independent variables. The questionnaire was a 5-point Likert scale which were strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. There were 4 questions asked under each dependent variable with a total of 24 questions. To be eligible for recruitment for the study, subjects must be registered patients, grant consent and must be able to respond to the questionnaire with or without the aid of assistance who might be an interpreter. Unregistered patients, patients whose responses were considered unreliable were excluded. One of the researchers and a trained assistant administered the questionnaire. For the null hypothesis, the standard for a decision was to reject the null hypothesis when the p-value was less than .05 Alpha level.

Results

1. **Null Hypothesis 1:** There is no satisfaction with the registration process at the Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

Table 1 Summary of Dependent t-test analysis on satisfaction with registration process

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	Sig	Decision
Registration process	303	3.25	0.34	8.23	.001	Significant
Satisfaction	303	3.74	0.96			

P<.05; df = 351; Critical t = 1.94, N= numbers of respondents, \bar{X} = mean, df = degree of freedom, SD= Standard Deviation

The analysis in Table 1 shows that t value was 8.23. When compared with critical t-value of 1.94 at .05 Alpha with 351 degrees of freedom, t- value was greater. Consequently, the null



hypothesis was rejected. This simply means that there was satisfaction with registration process at the eye department of the public tertiary hospital

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no satisfaction with the hospital environment of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital.

Table 2: Summary of Dependent t-test analysis on satisfaction with hospital environment

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	Sig	Decision
Hospital Environment	303	2.50	1.34	9.13	.001	Significant
Satisfaction	303	2.71	1.96			

P < .05; df = 351; Critical t = 1.94, N = numbers of respondents, \bar{X} = mean, df = degree of freedom, SD = Standard Deviation

The analysis in Table 2 shows that t value was 9.13. When compared with critical t-value of 1.94 at .05 Alpha with 351 degrees of freedom, t- value was greater. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This simply means that there was satisfaction with hospital environment at the eye department of the public health facility.

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no satisfaction with the services rendered by eye doctors at Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

Table 3: Summary of Dependent t-test analysis on satisfaction with services of doctors

Variables	n	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	Sig	Decision
Services of Doctors	303	4.07	3.74	6.87	.001	Significant
Satisfaction	303	3.34	3.11			

P < .05; df = 351; Critical t = 1.94, N = numbers of respondents, \bar{X} = mean, df = degree of freedom, SD = Standard Deviation

The analysis in Table 3 shows that t value was 6.87. When compared with critical t-value of 1.94 at .05 Alpha with 351 degrees of freedom, t- value was greater. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This simply means that there was satisfaction with services of doctors at the eye department of the public health facility.

Null Hypothesis 4: There is no satisfaction with the nursing services at Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

Table 4: Summary of Dependent t-test analysis on satisfaction with nursing services

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	Sig	Decision
Nursing Services	303	2.12	7.55	5.98	.001	Significant
Satisfaction	303	3.48	6.91			



$P < .05$; $df = 351$; Critical $t = 1.94$, $N =$ numbers of respondents, \bar{X} = mean, $df =$ degree of freedom, $SD =$ Standard Deviation.

The analysis in Table 4 above shows that t value was 5.98. When compared with critical t -value of 1.94 at .05 Alpha with 351 degrees of freedom, t -value was greater. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This simply means that there was satisfaction with nursing services at the eye department of the public health facility.

Null Hypothesis 5: There is no satisfaction with the pharmacy services at University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

Table 5: Summary of Dependent t -test analysis on satisfaction with pharmacy services

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	Sig	Decision
Pharmacy Services	303	3.45	7.84			
				6.11	.001	Significant
Satisfaction	303	3.23	7.82			

$P < .05$; $df = 351$; Critical $t = 1.94$, $N =$ numbers of respondents, \bar{X} = mean, $df =$ degree of freedom, $SD =$ Standard Deviation

The analysis in Table 5 shows that t value was 6.11. When compared with critical t -value of 1.94 at .05 Alpha with 351 degrees of freedom, t -value was greater. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This simply means that there was satisfaction with pharmacy services at the eye department of the public health facility.

Null Hypothesis 6: There is no satisfaction with waiting time at the Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

Table 6: Summary of Dependent t -test analysis on satisfaction with waiting time

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	Sig	Decision
Waiting time	303	1.25	4.34			
				7.11	.001	Significant
Satisfaction	303	1.74	4.96			

$P < .05$; $df = 351$; Critical $t = 1.94$, $N =$ numbers of respondents, \bar{X} = mean, $df =$ degree of freedom, $SD =$ Standard Deviation

The analysis in Table 6 shows that t value was 7.11. When compared with critical t -value of 1.94 at .05 Alpha with 351 degrees of freedom, t -value was greater. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This simply means that there was satisfaction with waiting time at the eye department of the public health facility.

Discussion of Findings

1. Patients' opinion with the registration process at the Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

This was a hospital-based study which focused on patients' perception of services rendered in a government eye health institution. Most previous Nigerian studies (Iliyasu, Abubakar & Gajida,



2010; Megbelayin, Babalola, Kurawa, Opubiri & Okonkwo, 2014; Afolabi & Erhun, 2003), have focused on private eye health facilities. In Nigeria, services provided at public health facilities are generally perceived by members of the public as being very poor. Private health facilities often are more patient-friendly but they are prohibitively expensive for the average Nigerian. Over 90% of the subjects were satisfied with registration processes. This is contrary to the finding in Kano by Iliyasu, Abubakar, Abubakar and Gajida, (2010) where missing case files contributed largely to patients' dissatisfaction.

2. Patients' opinion with the hospital environment of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital.

Eighty-five of the subjects in this study were satisfied with cleanliness of the hospital environment. Satisfaction with cleanliness of premises cut across several studies (Megbelayin, Babalola, Kurawa, Opubiri & Okonkwo, 2014; Ofili & Ofovwe, 2005; Olawoye, 2008). This may be due to the privatization of sanitation services in most public health institutions in Nigeria. This ensures that hospital premises remain tidy at all times even during union protests in form of strikes when all other workers do not come to work. Cleanliness of hospital environment ensures better uptake of eye services. A dirty polluted environment discourages patients and may dissuade them from keeping hospital appointments or encouraging friends and relations to access care.

3. Patients' opinion with the services rendered by eye doctors at Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

In the current study, satisfaction level with services of doctors was reported in 96.5% respondents. This was similar to that obtained by Iliyasu, Abubakar, Abubakar and Gajida (2010). Both studies were carried out in Federal Government tertiary institutions, although with different geographical settings. The current study was conducted in Uyo, South-South Nigeria while the second was conducted in Kano, North-West Nigeria.

4. Patients' opinion with the nursing services at Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

Ophthalmic nurses have additional training in ophthalmic care. They carry out preliminary assessment on patients before the ophthalmologists embark on additional procedures to make diagnoses and treat patients. In the current study, 89.3% of the respondents reported satisfaction with the services of nurses. This was similar to the finding of Megbelayin, Babalola, Kurawa, Opubiri & Okonkwo, 2014. Both studies were conducted in the same geopolitical region of Nigeria

5. Patients' opinion with the pharmacy services at University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

In the current study, 77.1% of the respondents reported satisfaction with the services of the pharmacy services. This was similar to a study from Northern Nigerian by Iliyasu, Abubakar, Abubakar and Gajida (2010). Often pharmacy departments are located some distance away from eye facilities in most Teaching Hospitals. The cause of reduced patients' satisfaction with certain services located outside the immediate environment of the eye facility might be difficulty locating such services. The sheer large size of some public health centers can create some levels of frustration and discontentment in accessing care because of difficulties locating service points.



Signages and hospital staff can help direct patients in areas of the hospital where services are to be accessed. Unfortunately, illiteracy, still common among individuals attending public health facilities in Nigeria, constitutes a significant barrier to the full benefits of signages.

6. Patients' opinion with waiting time at the Eye facility of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

Patient waiting time in outpatient clinics is often the major reason for patients' complaints regarding their experiences in outpatient clinics. Therefore, patient satisfaction with waiting time plays a crucial role in the overall satisfaction with services. In the present study, waiting time constituted the highest proportion of dissatisfied patients (22.5%). However, this was lower than 30% in Kano and 74.5% in Calabar (Iliyasu, Abubakar, Abubakar & Gajida, 2010; Megbelayin, Babalola, Kurawa, Opubiri & Okonkwo, 2014). Reason adduced for undue long waiting of health seekers in a hospital is provider-patient mismatch where health seekers outnumber health givers. Non-adherence to appointment schedules, dearth of basic amenities such as electricity and water and haphazard record system characterized by missing case files constitute additional delaying factors.

Conclusion

In this study, it was observed that patients who attended the Eye facility of the University of Uyo were satisfied with registration processes and the general hospital environment. Satisfaction was also recorded with services of the doctors, nurses, and pharmacy unit of the hospital. In addition, respondents were satisfied with time it took for them to access services.

Recommendations:

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made

1. Electronic Medical Record should be provided by the hospital authority to improve on the registration process.
2. University of Uyo Teaching Hospital should plant more ornamental trees to beautify the environment
3. University of Uyo Teaching Hospital should provide needed consumables to the doctors in order to continue to render satisfactory services to patients.
4. University of Uyo Teaching Hospital should provide needed material to the nurses in order to continue to render satisfactory services to patients.
5. University of Uyo Teaching Hospital should make available eye medicines at all times to avoid out of stock situations which may impact negatively on patients' satisfaction.
6. Appointment system should be commenced by the Eye facility of University of Uyo to reduce waiting time of the patients.

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