

Patient Satisfaction Visiting the Dental Clinics, Faculty of Dentistry, Najran University

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Abstract

Objectives: To find out the level of patient satisfaction visiting the dental clinic of faculty of dentistry, Najran University, Saudi Arabia. Providing quality in health care is very important and it can be assessed by evaluating the patient satisfaction seeking dental care. **Materials and Method:** A cross sectional study was conducted at the dental clinics of faculty of dentistry at Najran University. A simple random sampling technique was used. A questionnaire consisting of twenty two questions was used. **Results:** A total of 160 patients participated in this study. The highest proportion (40%) of the patient belonged to the age group of 18-25 years. The most common reason to visit a dentist was found to be for restoration of teeth (35%). Majority of the participants (93.75%) said that they would recommend the treatment provided at the clinics, College of dentistry to others. **Conclusion:** The survey showed that most of the patients were satisfied with the dentist-patient domain.

Keywords: dentist, patient, satisfaction, dental clinics, Najran University

1. INTRODUCTION

Patient satisfaction is an indicator of the level of patient's contentment with the health care received from their health care provider.

Patient satisfaction is easy to understand but difficult to define, however patient satisfaction can be defined by Keegan as the patient satisfaction reflects the total experience of health care. Satisfaction involves intellectual, emotional, psychological factor and previous experience, expectation of the patient.¹ Patient satisfaction is a multifactorial concept that plays a major role in measuring the degree of satisfaction including the patient's educational background, lifestyle, previous medical experience, and expectations;^{2,3} therefore, the measurement of distinct magnitudes of dental health care maybe more appropriate.

Patient's satisfaction is influenced by various factor such as the nature, behavior, communication skills and personality of dental healthcare provider. Many studies on patient satisfaction shows that desirable communication between patients and health care provider satisfied the patients. Communication skill is one of the important factor determining the level of patient satisfaction. Communicate with patient liberally, concentrating towards what patients are complaining of and what are their requirement result in a good relationship between patient and dentists.^{4, 5} Patient satisfaction can impact a patient's likelihood of choosing a dentist, making and keeping appointments, and complying with dentists' recommendations.⁶⁻¹⁰

In the dental field, patient satisfaction can help to locate the strength and weakness aspects in the dental centers and therefore, assist in elevating the quality of treatment and better future planning.¹¹

Awareness in regards to dental wellbeing has prompted a change in patient's state of mind towards nature of dental treatment.¹² The role of dental specialist is critical to enhance the nature of dental administration and to expand patients' fulfillment level, readiness to utilize the administration once again and to refers the dental services to others.¹³

This study has been conducted to evaluate the level of patient's satisfaction with the dental health services provided at the faculty of dentistry clinics, Najran University so that the quality of dental care provided at our clinics could be assessed.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional study was conducted among 160 patients, aged 18 years and above, visiting the dental clinics, faculty of dentistry, Najran University. A simple random sampling technique was used.

Ethical approval and official permission were obtained from ethical committee of the college of dentistry. A questionnaire consisting of 22 questions were taken from male patients aged 18 years and above who were willing to participate in the study. An informed consent was taken from the patient who participated in the study.

The questionnaire consisted of five Sections. Demographic details-Information, Patient's reasons for visiting the clinics, patient-dentist interaction, technical competency of the dentist, dental clinic set-up /environment. The questionnaire was translated into the regional language and administered using face-to-face interview. Patients were also assisted to fill up the questionnaire.

Filled questionnaires were collected and analyzed using SPSS v.16.

3. RESULTS

A total of 160 patients were approached for this survey and they agreed to participate in the study.

Table 1 shows the details of socio-demographic profile of patients including (Age, Education, Income and Nationality) .The highest proportion of the patients (40%) belonged to the age group between 18-25 years, followed by the 26-35 years age group (28.75%). Majority of the participants (48.75%)

Were post graduates. Half of the participants of (50%) had a monthly income less than 3000 riyals. More than half of the participants (60%) were Saudi nationals whilst the remaining (40%) were Non Saudis. (Table 1).

Patient satisfaction was measured according to four disciplines: Patient's reasons for visiting the clinic, patient-dentist interaction, technical competency of the dentist and dental clinic set-up /environment. It was found in the study, that a majority of the participants (93.75%) said that they would recommend the treatment provided at the dental clinics, faculty of dentistry to others implying that they were quite satisfied with the dental care provided here.

Table 2 shows the various reasons due to which the patient had visited the dentist. The most common reason to visit a dentist was found to be for restoration of teeth (35%) followed by pain (20%). Vast majority of the patients (68.75%) were aware about the clinics at the faculty of dentistry through their friends and for most of the patients (63.75%), it was not their first visit.

The survey showed that most of the patients were satisfied with the dentist patient domain. 93.75% of the patients found the dentist to be friendly with them. (Fig: 1)

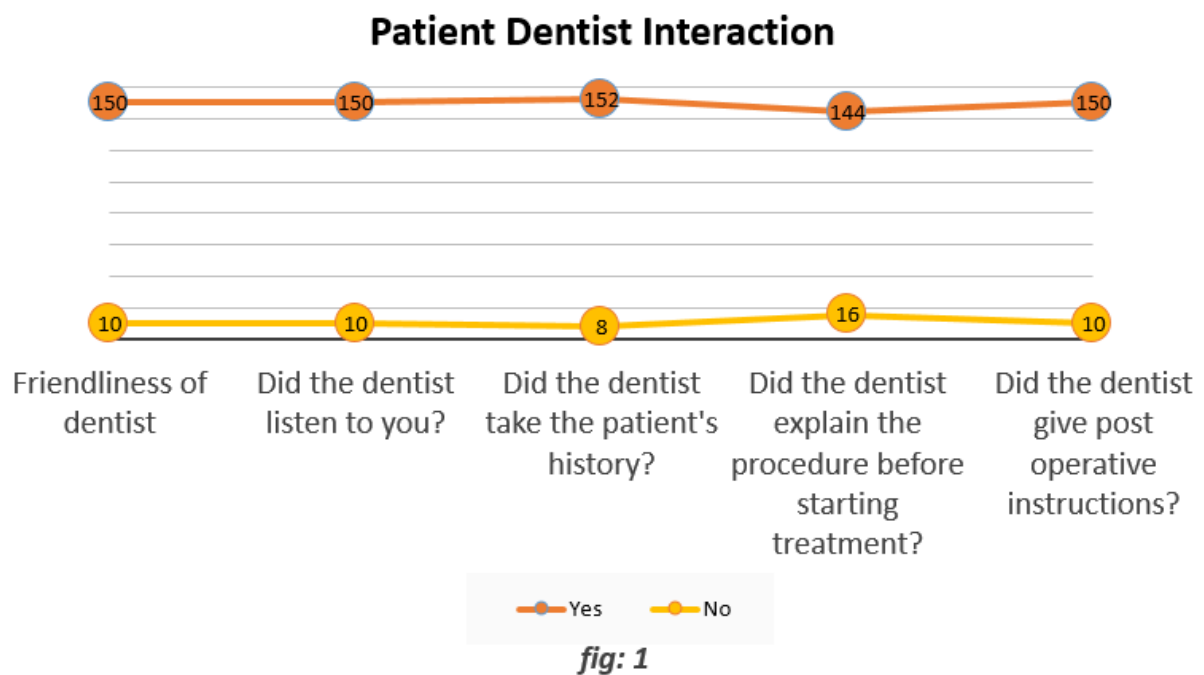
Figure 2 and 3 show that most of the patients (91.25%) agreed with the technical competency items, a vast majority of the patients (92.5%) were completely satisfied with the clinical setup. However, 88.75% reported that they had to wait for a long time to get an appointment for their dental visit.

Table 1: Demographic distribution of study subjects (N = 160)

DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION	NUMBER (N %)
Age (in years)	
18-25	64 (40%)
26-35	46 (28.75%)
36-45	22 (13.75%)
Above 45	28 (17.5%)
Level of education	
Uneducated	8 (5%)
Primary school	10 (6.25%)
Intermediate school	24 (15%)
Secondary school	40 (25%)
Post-graduation	78 (48.75%)
Monthly Income (in Riyals)	
None	18 (11.25%)
Less than 3000	80 (50%)
3000-6000	32 (20%)
6000-9000	16 (10%)
More than 9000	14 (8.75%)
Nationality	
Saudi	96 (60%)
Non Saudi	64 (40%)

Table 2: Reasons for Visiting a Dentist

1. Knowledge about the clinic	
From Friends	110 (68.75%)
Social media	16 (10%)
Community program	24 (15%)
Other reasons	10 (6.25%)
2. Is it your first visit?	
Yes	58 (36.25%)
No	102 (63.75%)
3. Reasons for dental visit	
Routine Checkup.	30 (18.75%)
Pain	32 (20%)
Restorative	56 (35%)
Prosthodontics	24 (15%)
Oral surgery	8 (5%)
Others	10 (6.25%)



Technical Competency Of The Dentist

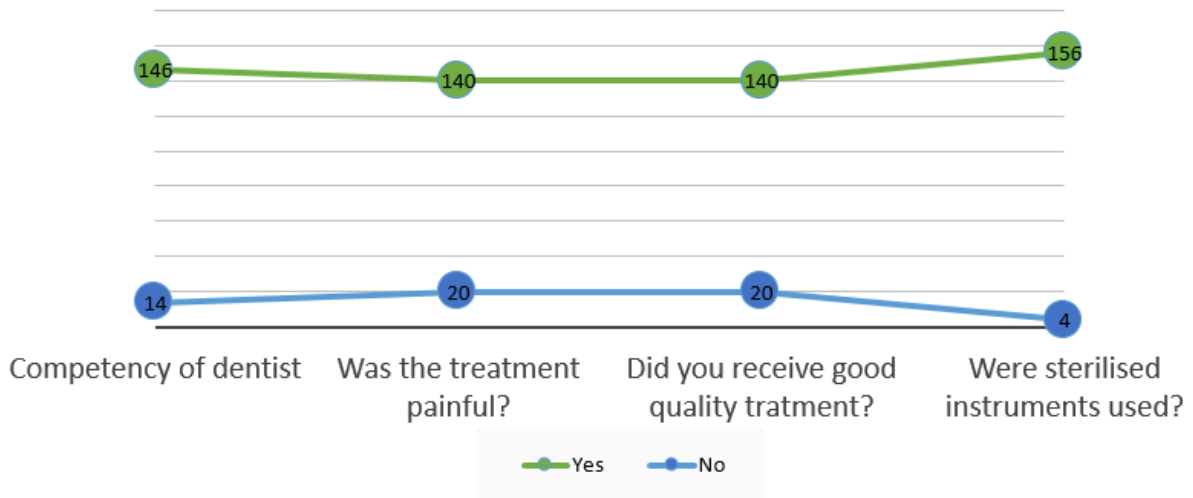


fig: 2

Dental Clinic Environment

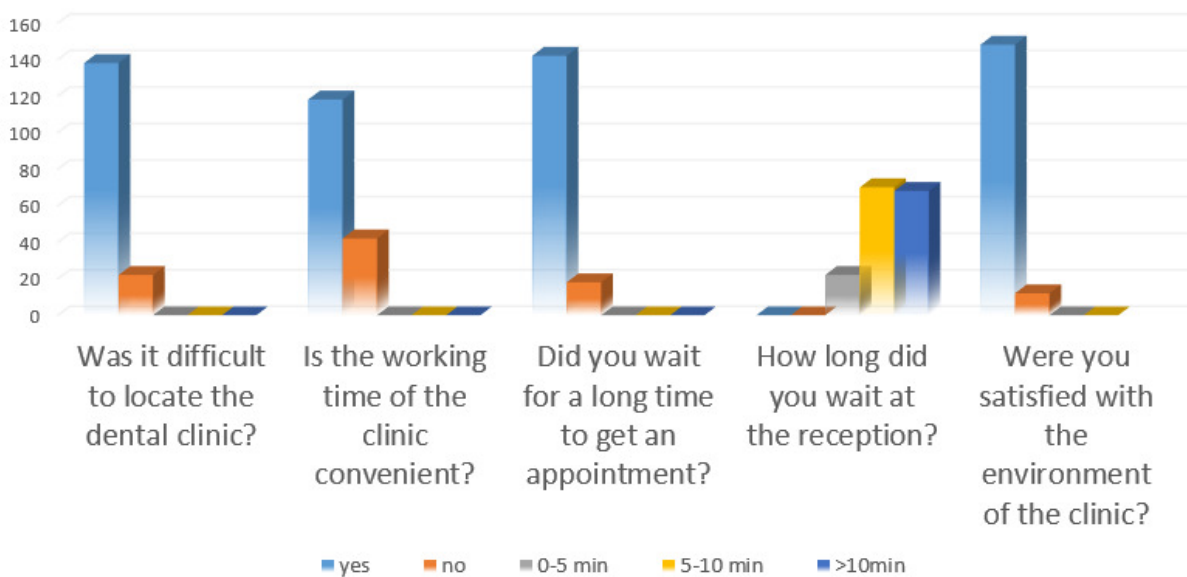


fig:3

4. DISCUSSION

With the improvement of technology and science, improving quality in healthcare has become important. Commitment to provide a high-quality service and achieving patient's satisfaction become important issues for the dental health care provider. Assessment of quality of the health care is necessary and compulsory for all health services, in such evaluation the participation of patients and their experience as well as their review pays important role.¹⁴

This study was aimed at assessing the patient satisfaction and the problems if any associated with the dental health care provided, 160 patients participated and reflected their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with quality of dental care. This study included five factors (Age, Education, Income and nationality)) which represent the main sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with dental services.

In this study, the demographic characteristics of the patients did not affect the satisfaction of the patients with dental care, which is in accordance with the Javed Y Patil study¹⁵. However, it was found that majority of the patients attending the clinic under the faculty of dentistry belonged to the age group 18-25 years. The reason

being that most of the patients were students belonging to Najran University. Hence, it was convenient for them to visit the clinics.

The study shows that satisfaction with dental care was high, which is similar to the findings of many studies.^{16,17} It was found that a vast majority of the patients would recommend the dental clinics at Najran university and accordingly, the majority of the patients who visited the clinics had heard about the clinics through their friends.

The questionnaire tries to measure the level of patient satisfaction and quality of dental health care provided at the dental clinics. Results obtained reflect the quality of dental care. Most of the patients attributed their reason to visit the dental clinic as restoration of teeth and pain. These two reasons contributed a little more than half (55%) of the all reasons why patients came to Dental clinics, Najran university. This can be attributed to the high incidence of dental caries in Saudi Arabia.^{18, 19}

With regard to the patient satisfaction with the dental clinic set up, it was very encouraging to note that most of the patients expressed their satisfaction with the dental clinic set up. Most of the patients who participated in this study were satisfied with the quality of dental care and others were dissatisfied with the long waiting time for appointments, which is due to less number of dental staff in comparison to the patients visiting the dental clinic.

The results show that long appointment time for the treatment along with difficulty in locating of the dental clinics in the University seemed to be the main reason for patient dissatisfaction in the clinics, faculty of Dentistry, Najran University. This is in accordance with several studies reporting that long waiting time for appointments was the reason for least satisfaction among the patients.

Perhaps appointment of more dental staff in the dental clinics will bring down the appointment time for the patients drastically. More effort is also needed to facilitate the location of the dental clinics so that patients other than students can easily access the dental health care provided at our clinics as the university has recently moved to the present location which is on the outskirts of the city.

5. CONCLUSION

The results indicated that the majority of the patients were satisfied with the dentist-patient interaction, technical competency of the dentist and the setup of the dental clinics at the faculty of Dentistry, Najran University.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We declare that there is no conflict of interests and no financial support was received.

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