

Comparison of Patient Satisfaction and Observer Rating of Outpatient Care among Public Hospitals in Shanghai

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Abstract : Background: The patient satisfaction survey is becoming of increasing importance for hospitals or other providers to get more reimbursement and/or more governmental subsidies. However, when the results of patient satisfaction survey are compared among medical institutions, there are some concerns. The primary objectives of this study were to evaluate patient satisfaction in tertiary hospitals of Shanghai and to compare the satisfaction rating on physician services between patients and observers. Methods: Two hundred outpatients were randomly selected for patient satisfaction survey in each of 28 public tertiary hospitals of Shanghai. Four or five volunteers were selected to observe 5 physicians' practice in each of above hospitals and rated observed physicians' practice. The outpatients that the volunteers observed their physician practice also filled in the satisfaction questionnaires. The rating scale for outpatient survey and volunteers' observation was: 1 (very dissatisfied) to 6 (very satisfied). If the rating was equal to or greater than 5, we considered the outpatients and volunteers were satisfied with the services. The validity and reliability of the measure were assessed. Multivariate regressions for each of the 4 dimensions and overall of patient satisfaction were used in analyses. Paired t tests were applied to analyze the rating agreement on physician services between outpatients and volunteers. Results: Overall, 90% of surveyed outpatients were satisfied with outpatient care in the tertiary public hospitals of Shanghai. The lowest three satisfaction rates were seen in the items of 'Restrooms were sanitary and not crowded' (81%), 'It was convenient for the patient to pay medical bills' (82%), and 'Medical cost in the hospital was reasonable' (84%). After adjusting the characteristics of patients, the patient satisfaction in general hospitals was higher than that in specialty hospitals. In addition, after controlling the patient characteristics and number of hospital visits, the hospitals with higher outpatient cost per visit had lower patient satisfaction. Paired t tests showed that the rating on 6 items in the dimension of physician services (total 14 items) was significantly different between outpatients and observers, in which 5 were rated lower by the observers than by the outpatients. Conclusions: The hospital managers and physicians should use patient satisfaction and observers' evaluation to detect the room for improvement in areas such as social skills cost control, and medical ethics.

Keywords : patient satisfaction, observation, quality, hospital

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