

Chronically Ill Patient Satisfaction: An Indicator of Quality of Service Provided at Primary Health Care Settings in Alexandria

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Abstract : Background: Primary health care (PHC) can be considered the first contact between the patient and the health care system. It includes all the basic health care services to be provided to the community. Patient's satisfaction regarding health care has often improved the provision of care, also considered as one of the most important measures for evaluating the health care. Objective: This study aims to identify patient's satisfaction with services provided at the primary health care settings in Alexandria. Setting: Seven primary health care settings representing the seven zones of Alexandria governorate were selected randomly and included in the study. Subjects: The study comprised 386 patients attended the previously selected settings at least twice before the time of the study. Tools: Two tools were utilized for data collection; sociodemographic characteristics and health status structured interview schedule and patient satisfaction scale. Reliability test for the scale was done using Cronbach's Alpha test, the result of the test ranged between 0.717 and 0.967. The overall satisfaction was computed and divided into high, medium, and low satisfaction. Results: Age of the studied sample ranged between 19 and 62 years, more than half (54.2%) of them aged 40 to less than 60 years. More than half (52.8%) of the patients included in the study were diabetics, 39.1% of them were hypertensive, 19.2% had cardiovascular diseases, the rest of the sample had tumor, liver diseases, and orthopedic/neurological disorders (6.5%, 5.2% & 3.2%, respectively). The vast majority of the study group mentioned high satisfaction with overall service cost, environmental conditions, medical staff attitude and health education given at the PHC settings (87.8%, 90.7%, 86.3% & 90.9%, respectively), however, medium satisfaction was mostly reported concerning medical checkup procedures, follow-up data and referral system (41.2%, 28.5% & 28.9%, respectively). Score level of patient satisfaction with health services provided at the assessed Primary health care settings proved to be significantly associated with patients' social status ($P=0.003$, $X^2=14.2$), occupation ($P=0.011$, $X^2=11.2$), and monthly income ($P=0.039$, $X^2=6.50$). In addition, a significant association was observed between score level of satisfaction and type of illness ($P=0.007$, $X^2=9.366$), type of medication ($P=0.014$, $X^2=9.033$), prior knowledge about the health center ($P=0.050$, $X^2=3.346$), and highly significant with the administrative zone ($P=0.001$, $X^2=55.294$). Conclusion: The current study revealed that overall service cost, environmental conditions, staff attitude and health education at the assessed primary health care settings gained high patient satisfaction level, while, medical checkup procedures, follow-up, and referral system caused a medium level of satisfaction among assessed patients. Nevertheless, social status, occupation, monthly income, type of illness, type of medication and administrative zones are all factors influencing patient satisfaction with services provided at the health facilities.

Keywords : patient satisfaction, chronic illness, quality of health service, quality of service indicators

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