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Patient Feedback - Experience on Specialist Out-patient Specialist Service

Author(s)

Wong ELY, Lui SF, Cheung AWL, Huang NF, Sze RKC, Yam CHK, Yeoh EK
The Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

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Introduction

Patient experience reflects the quality of care from the perspective of patients and it is recognized as key measures of quality in health services worldwide. Improving patient experience continues to be a top strategic priority for hospitals and health systems.

Objectives

The study aimed to explore patients' experience by adopting a locally validated tool - Specialist Outpatient Experience Questionnaire (SOPEQ), and to identify areas for improvement in delivering specialist outpatient service.

Methodology

A territory-wide cross-sectional survey was conducted in those attending 26 Hospital Authority (HA) specialist outpatient clinics (SOPCs) between 11 July and 27 November 2014, using SOPEQ. The participants must be aged 18 or above, and able to speak Cantonese. Attendances at paediatrics, hospice, psychiatry, dental, multi-speciality, anaesthesiology, pathology and nurse clinics were excluded from the survey. The SOPEQ consisted of 48 evaluative items which covered 10 care aspects to codify the patient experiences following the patients' journey from making appointment to leaving the clinic. The response to evaluative items would be converted score using a scale of 0 (most negative experience) to 10 (most positive experience).

Result

A total of 13,966 patients responded to the survey with a response rate of 62% and the findings were encouraging. The survey revealed that the overall patient experience on specialist outpatient services was rated 7 and above by 84% of respondents on the scoring scale of 0-10. The patients' experiences were found to be similar across all the 26 HA SOPCs. However, there was room for improvement in several aspects of patient experience including (1) information on logistic arrangement before and during the appointment; (2) self-introduction of healthcare professionals to patient; (3) involvement of decision making; (4) information on self-care after leaving the clinic; and (5) information on the channels to express opinions/ complaint. This study is a first territory-wide patient experience survey on specialist outpatient service using a locally validated tool. The findings provides a representative picture of patient experiences in HA SOPCs setting which is an important insight for the hospital management and frontline healthcare staff in delivering health care, and identifying areas for continuous improvements. The survey also serves as an important platform for patient engagement in care process. Further study is needed to identify the underlying factors or subgroup of patients for those aspects of patient experience with relatively lower scores.