

Patient Satisfaction: A Framework for Clinical Practice

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INTRODUCTION: Patient satisfaction is influenced by multiple factors, such as patient and provider characteristics, and events surrounding the patient-provider encounter. Patient satisfaction is important because it impacts the patient's willingness to recommend the provider or facility, the likelihood that the patient returns, adherence to treatment plans, and clinical outcomes.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study was to explore the factors associated with patient satisfaction.

METHODS: This was a literature review of factors associated with patient satisfaction. Articles included were from Google Scholar™, PubMed.gov, and PyscInfo® published from 2000 to 2019.

RESULTS: This review included 76 articles. Patient satisfaction increased as age and education increased; gender and race both had variable findings. Mental health negatively affected satisfaction, but health status was inconsistent. Health literacy indirectly affected patient satisfaction. Improvements in room aesthetics, food quality, and parking availability improved patient satisfaction. Positive perceptions of medical safety were correlated with higher patient satisfaction. Patient illness or injury, as well as the resolution of the problem was associated with satisfaction, but severity of injury was not. Adequate pain management improved satisfaction. Course of care was associated with satisfaction; including events preceding discharge and electronic discharge instructions and continuity of staffing and positive front desk interaction. A larger patient census decreased satisfaction, and shorter wait times improved satisfaction, however, length of stay did not influence satisfaction. Physician interpersonal and competency qualities all improved satisfaction.

CONCLUSION: The literature demonstrates a variety of factors that impact patient satisfaction based on relatively recent literature. There are three basic domains represented: 1) patient expectations, 2) quality attributes of care, 3) the course of care (parameters). Aspects that are modifiable by healthcare organizations are represented in well-designed and validated satisfaction surveys. An important feature is the recursive nature of the model; satisfaction with any encounter impacts the patient's expectation for the next encounter.