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## Factors Influencing Patient Satisfaction with Healthcare: The Patient's Perception

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# Factors Influencing Patient Satisfaction with Healthcare: The Patient's Perception

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## **Factors Influencing Patient Satisfaction with Healthcare: The Patient's Perception**

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this descriptive study was to identify factors that perspective patients perceive as ones that influence their satisfaction with healthcare. A distinctive feature of the study was that it addressed factors that influence satisfaction with healthcare from the patient's perception (emic perspective) rather than the provider's (etic) assumptions.

### **Methods**

A researcher-designed survey was used to identify demographic factors and allow participants to rank factors that might influence their satisfaction in healthcare experiences. One open-ended question was included: What could your caregiver do to make your visit more satisfying, pleasant, or comfortable? .

### **Setting**

The study was set in selected Central Georgia churches, civic organizations, places of employment, and schools. Non-healthcare settings were purposefully selected so that participants would not link their responses to a particular healthcare provider, office, or to treatment for a particular illness.

### **Sample**

A convenience sample of 380 surveys was used with a final  $n = 317$ . Although attempts were made to have gender and ethnic diversity represented, the final sample was composed of predominately Caucasian respondents; 60.5% were female.

### **Survey Instrument**

Within the survey, the questions were grouped into categories including immediacy of care, convenience, comfort, wait time, needs met, rapport, and medical care that was successful in treating an illness or keeping

one well. Participants then prioritized the importance of four areas of care: convenient appointment/courteous staff/ ease in billing; comfort/cleanliness/ privacy; adequate time with caregiver/ attention/respect; and information on how to get well and stay well. Since members of the research group are being educated as nurse practitioners, a few questions on the survey were included to assess the participants' knowledge and understanding of that provider type: had the person ever seen a nurse practitioner and if so, were they satisfied with the care they received or would they be willing to see a nurse practitioner for future healthcare.

## **Results**

The data were analyzed using the Pearson Chi Square test and factor analysis; no statistically significant findings were noted; however, there were some findings with clinical significance. For example, elderly people perceived convenience and comfort as more important while participants with high school education and post- graduate education felt that immediacy of care was a more important factor in their satisfaction with healthcare encounter. Two-thirds of the sample had never seen a nurse practitioner but over half were willing to see a nurse practitioner. Of those who had seen a nurse practitioner, 88.7% were either satisfied or very satisfied with the care they received.

## **Implications**

An emic view of what patients desire in health care encounters is important to designing proactive approaches to care. In the contemporary healthcare market, consumer satisfaction is moving into a prominent position as an outcome measure of quality care. Patients are more likely to remain with the healthcare provider long-term when they are satisfied with the care they receive and compliance with provider recommendations related to care improves.

## **Future Research**

This study had clear limitations: homogeneity of sample and one geographic region of study. Replication of the study with a more diverse group and in other sections of the US would be helpful. It would also be of value to examine healthcare providers' perception of patient satisfaction and compare these with patient perceptions of satisfaction.

### **Works Cited**

Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 5th ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1988.