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Comparing patient satisfaction with primary health care services in the Free State and Gauteng provinces

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2016-02-09
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/19480

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND

Patients constitute the majority of healthcare users at the Primary Health Care level (PHC) in South Africa where these services are free at the point of entry. Patient satisfaction surveys provide information about the quality of health care services and what is needed to improve them. There is a dearth of knowledge on the factors influencing patient satisfaction with PHC clinic services.

OBJECTIVE

This study compared patient satisfaction with PHC Services in the Free State and Gauteng Provinces.

METHODS

Secondary data analysis was conducted on cross sectional survey data obtained from the Research on the State of Nursing Project run by the Centre for Health Policy (RESON-CHP) in 2012. Systematic random sampling was used to target 1110 adult patients attending Antiretroviral (ART), hypertension, diabetes and Tuberculosis services. Caregivers of children attending child health and well-baby clinic were also sampled. Patients completed a pre-tested satisfaction survey with questions on facility evaluation, experience with health care providers and medication received. A scoring scale was developed to measure satisfaction. Factors influencing satisfaction were measured using multiple logistic regression analysis. The data was weighted and analysed using STATA version 13.

RESULTS

A total of 1096/1110 respondents responded to the patient satisfaction survey signifying a 98.8% response rate. The majority of respondents were females (over 60%) in both provinces. Over 90% of patients were satisfied with PHC services in both provinces. The factors associated with satisfaction in Gauteng and Free State were time spent waiting for consultation (OR Gauteng 4.5 CI 1.68-12.12; Free State 4.84 CI 1.01-23.1), nurses listened (OR Gauteng 6.18 CI 2.02-18.89; Free State 5.2 CI 1.15-23.64), being given information on condition (OR Gauteng 8.14 CI 3-22.08; Free State 10.17 CI 2.52-41.14) and being treated politely (OR Gauteng 22.95 CI 5.3-99.36; Free State 22.03 CI 4.6-105.31). Having privacy respected came out as a significant factor in Free State (OR 5.5 CI 1.05-28.8).

CONCLUSIONS

High levels of satisfaction with PHC services were experienced by study participants in both provinces. The on-going PHC revitalisation reforms could leverage on maintaining or improving the factors associated with patient satisfaction. Satisfied patients adhere to treatment plans and have better health seeking behaviour which translates to improved clinical outcomes. Nurses should therefore continue listening, respecting and treating their patients with politeness. We recommend that suggestion boxes be made available for patients to contribute their suggestions as this is important for channelling feedback to providers about patient centred care. There is also need to have efficient work schedules to reduce patient waiting times.

Keywords: Primary Health Care; Patient Satisfaction; Province; Gauteng ; Free State; South Africa