



A STUDY ON HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND PATIENT SATISFACTION – WITH REFERENCE TO PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES OF HONAVAR TALUK

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ABSTRACT:

Over the past years, patient satisfaction survey have gained increasing attention as meaningful and essential sources of information for identifying gaps and developing and effective action plan for quality improvement in healthcare organisations. However, there are very few published studies reporting of the improvements resulting from feedback information of patient satisfaction survey. This article investigates critically the relationship of influential attributes towards overall patients satisfaction in addition to it's impact on the quality improvement process of healthcare organisations.



KEYWORDS: *primary health centres, patient satisfaction, health care services.*

INTRODUCTION:

Health care is the improvement of health via the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, amelioration or cure of disease, illness, injury and other physical and mental impairments in people. Healthcare is delivered by health professionals and allied health fields. Medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, midwifery, nursing, audiology, psychology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, athletic training and other health professionals all constitute health care. It includes work done in providing primary care, secondary care and tertiary care, as well as in public health.

As primary care is the day-to-day health care given by a healthcare provider, it acts as the first contact and principal point of continuing care for patients with in a healthcare system and co-ordinate other specialist care that the patient may need. Depending on the nature of health condition, patient may then be referred for secondary and tertiary care.

The concept of primary health care (PHC) evolve during 1970's, influence by and influencing the basic needs approach to social development. Primary health care is essential healthcare made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community by means acceptable to them, through their full participation and at the cost that the community and country can afford.

There are eight essential components of primary health care:

- Education about common health problems and what can be done to prevent and control them.
- Maternal and child health care, including family planning.
- Promotion of proper nutrition.

- Immunization against major infectious diseases.
- Adequate supply of safe water.
- Basics sanitation.
- Prevention and control of locally epidemic diseases.

a. Appropriate treatment for common diseases and injuries.

Patient satisfaction is an important and commonly used indicator for measuring the quality in health care. Patient satisfaction affects clinical outcomes, patient retention and medical malpractice claims. It affects the timely, efficient and patient centred delivery of quality healthcare. Patient satisfaction is thus a proxy but a very effective indicator to measure the success of doctors and hospitals.

Honavar taluk is a port town in coastal Karnataka known for its beautiful landscapes and rich history. When it comes to health care, the taluk is having one taluka hospital (government undertaking), 9 primary health centres (PHCs) and 9 private hospitals. As per the government norms one primary health centre is established for every 20000 population in coastal areas and for every 10000 population in hilly areas of Honavar Taluk to provide basic health care services to the rural people.

OBJECTIVES:

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To study the types of services provided by primary health centres.
2. To study the facilities available in primary health centres.
3. To study the type of patients availing the services in primary health centres.
4. To study the patients satisfaction level in primary health centres.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study is undertaken on the basis of data collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data is collected on a random basis from two types of respondents. In total 9 medical officers of primary health centres and 45 patients of all primary health centres are considered for collecting the primary data. Secondary data is collected from the Taluka Health Office, Honavar.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

Table 1: List of Primary Health Centres of Honavar Taluk:

Sl. No.	Location	Number of employees
1	Balkur	9
2	Gersoppa	5
3	Haldipur	9
4	Hosad	6
5	Kadtoka	9
6	Kharwa	10
7	Manki	9
8	Salkod	8
9	Samshi	5
Total	9	70

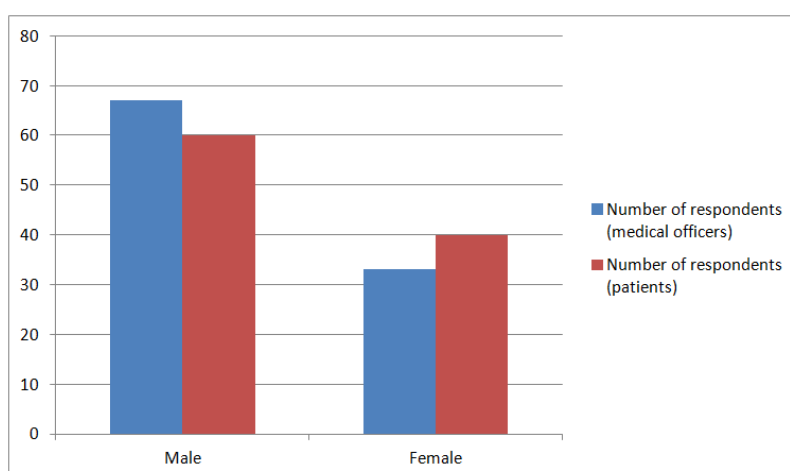
Table 2: Classification of Employees of Primary Health Centres:

Sl. No	Primary health centre name.	Medical officers working	Staff nurse working	Junior hospital attender male	Junior hospital attender female	Senior hospital attender female	FDA	SDA	Lab technician	Pharmacist pharmacist	Driver	Group D	Total
1	Balkur	1	1	1	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	9
2	Gersoppa	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	5
3	Haldipur	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	9
4	Hosad	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
5	Kadtoka	1	1	1	4	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	9
6	Kharwa	1	1	0	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	9
7	Manki	0	0	0	4	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	10
8	Salkod	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	8
9	Samshi	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Total		8	5	5	28	5	4	3	2	2	1	7	70

Above table 2 shows that in all 70 employees are working in 9 primary health centres of Honavar Taluk. Out of 9 primary health centres, 8 primary health centres have full time medical officers and Manki primary health centre medical officer is working on deputation basis. Highest number of female attenders are found working in all the primary health centres but staff nurse, lab technicians and pharmacist who are very much essential for primary health centres are employed in few primary health centres.

Table 3: Gender Wise Classification of Respondents:

Gender	Number of respondents (medical officers)	Number of respondents (patients)
Male	6 (67%)	27 (60%)
Female	3 (33%)	18 (40%)
Total	9 (100%)	45 (100%)



The above table 3 gives the information about gender wise classification of respondents. Out of 9 medical officers, 6 were male and 3 were female constituting 67% and 33% of the total respondents.

Patient satisfaction survey was conducted by the researcher and 5 patients of each primary health centres were taken as respondents. Total number of patient respondents were 45 among which 27 were male and 18 were female constituting 60% and 40% of the total respondents.

Table 4: Health Care Services Provided by Primary Health Centres:

Health care services	Balkur	Gersoppa	Haldipur	Hosad	Kadtoka	Kharwa	Manki	Salkod	Samshi
Out Patient Department	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
In Patient Department	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
House to house services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reproductive and child health services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Immunization services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
National programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Delivery services	-	-	-	-	-✓	-	✓	-	-
Information education programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Laboratory services	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-
Pradhanmantri matrutva surakshita yojana	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Janani suraksha yojana	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paediatric services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

From the above table 4 it can be understood that different varieties of services are offered by primary health centres of Honavar Taluk. The table reveals that all the above services accept delivery services and laboratory services are provided by all nine primary health centres. Whereas, Kadtoka primary health centre and Manki primary health centre are the only two primary health centres providing delivery services. Laboratory services are provided by Kadtoka, Salkod, Gersoppa and Manki primary health centres. Kadtoka and Gersoppa primary health centres provide laboratory services like blood test, BP test and sugar test only. Because of non availability of lab technicians, other advanced laboratory services are not provided by these primary health centres.

Table 5: Facilities Available in Primary Health Centres:

Facilities	Balkur	Gersoppa	Haldipur	Hosad	Kadtoka	Kharwa	Manki	Salkod	Samshi
Wound dressing room	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rest room	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free medicines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oxygen	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Casualty	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drinking water	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ward	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Washrooms	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ambulance or Jeep	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-
Canteen	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-
Tele medicine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nandini milk parlour	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-

Above table 5 gives the details about facilities available in primary health centres. The table reveals that all the above said facilities are available in all 9 primary health centres except facilities like oxygen, ambulance or Jeep, canteen and Nandini milk parlour. Ambulance service is available only in Manki primary health centre and in Kharwa primary health centre Jeep facility is available which is used during emergencies to carry the patients to taluka hospital. Canteen and Nandini milk parlour are available only in Manki primary health centre.

Table 6: Nature of Primary Health Centres:

Primary Health Centre Name	Nature
Balkur	Non 24x7 PHC
Gersoppa	Non 24x7 PHC
Haldipur	Non 24x7 PHC
Hosad	Non 24x7 PHC
Kadtoka	Non 24x7 PHC
Kharwa	Non 24x7 PHC
Manki	24x7 PHC
Salkod	Non 24x7 PHC
Samshi	Non 24x7 PHC

From the above table 6 it can be understood that only Manki primary health centre is the 24x7 primary health centre, where services are provided round the clock for all 7 days of the week. Whereas, all other eight primary health centres are non 24x7 health centres and they work from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during week days and from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Sundays. As they don't work round the clock they are called as non 24x7 primary health centres.

Table 7: Insurance Coverage Provided by Primary Health Centres:

Primary Health Centre Name	Insurance
Balkur	ABARK
Gersoppa	ABARK
Haldipur	ABARK
Hosad	ABARK
Kadtoka	ABARK
Kharwa	ABARK
Manki	ABARK
Salkod	ABARK
Samshi	ABARK

Above table 7 shows that as primary health centres are government undertaken health centres, all the services to the patients are provided free of cost. So, question of provision of insurance facilities does not arise in primary health centres. But all the services provided in primary health centres are covered under ABARK (Ayushman Bharat Aarogya Karnataka)scheme.

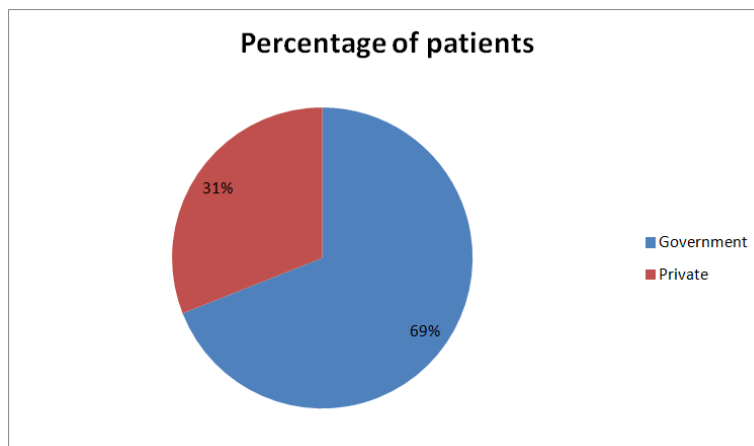
Table 8: Capacity of Primary Health Centres:

Primary Health Centre Name	Capacity
Balkur	6 bedded hospital
Gersoppa	6 bedded hospital
Haldipur	6 bedded hospital
Hosad	6 bedded hospital
Kadtoka	6 bedded hospital
Kharwa	6 bedded hospital
Manki	10 bedded hospital
Salkod	6 bedded hospital
Samshi	10 bedded hospital

From the above table 8 it can be understood that among 9 primary health centres, only Manki primary health centre is a 10 bedded primary health centre and remaining 8 primary health centres are 6 bedded primary health centres.

Table 9: Hospitals Frequently Visited by the Patients:

Hospitals	Number of patients	Percentage of patients
Government	31	69%
Private	14	31%



The above table 9 shows that out of 45 patients, 31 patients responded that they frequently visit primary health centres only, to get the treatment for the diseases they suffer from. If any facilities are not available in primary health centres, they then visit Taluka hospital, Honavar for further treatment. But 14 of the respondents gave the opinion that government hospitals are not reliable and hence they prefer private hospitals than government hospitals.

Table 10: Experience of Patients in Booking Appointments:

Feedback	Number of patients	Percentage of patients
Very easy	45	100%
Easy	-	-
Somewhat easy	-	-
Difficult	-	-
Somewhat difficult	-	-
Very difficult	-	-

From the above table 10 it is clearly visible that all 45 of the respondents were of the opinion that they face no problems booking their appointments. It is very easy to get the appointments in primary health centres. Patients will be issued with an appointment book during their first visit to primary health centre and subsequently patients can get the treatment only by presenting the same book without any pain of booking appointment.

Table 11: Patients Response on Staff Empathy:

Response	Number of patients	Percentage of patients
Very empathetic	45	100%
Empathetic	-	-
Somewhat empathetic	-	-
Not empathetic	-	-

Above table 11 reveals that 100% of the respondents, including those who visit the primary health centres rarely gave the opinion that all the staff from doctors to attenders working in primary health centres are very empathetic and give a homely treatment.

Table 12: Patients Response on Waiting Hours in the Hospital:

Response	Number of patients	Percentage of patients
As I expected	45	100%
Had to wait for more than I expected	--	-

From the above table 12 it is understood that all 45 patients are happy with the quick service provided by the health centres. The patients expressed that the waiting hours would be long only if there were lengthy que on a particular day. Otherwise patients would get the treatment immediately on their turn. Majority of the patients expressed that availability of the doctor in the primary health centres is the only problem persisting. If the doctor is available, they get the treatment immediately without any delay.

Table 13: Patients Response on the Treatment given by the Doctor:

Response	Number of patients	Percentage of patients
Very happy	24	53%
Happy	7	16%
Somewhat happy	14	31%
Not happy	-	-
Total	45	100%

From the above table 13 it is understandable that 24 out of 45 patients respondents were very happy by the treatment given by the doctor. Seven out of 45 patients expressed that they are happy with the doctor's treatment. But 14 out of 45 opined that even if the doctor and the treatment is good,

they do not visit primary health centres, prefer private hospitals because of non available of advance treatment in primary health centres.

CONCLUSION:

Patient satisfaction is considered to be a very important and key element for measuring health outcomes and quality of healthcare. A satisfied patient is more likely to develop a deeper and long lasting relationship with they are medical provider, leading to improved compliance, continuity of care and ultimately better health outcomes. The health care services already provided by primary health centres in the rural areas of Honavar taluk, are basic services which are definitely enjoyed by the patients. But patients are of the opinion that during some emergencies like labour pain or snake bite, aaj medicines or facilities for the same are not available in the primary health centres, patients have to be rushed to the taluka hospital and in the due course every chance of loss of life or complexity to health may arise. The government should focus on introducing more number of health care services then the one which are already existing in primary health centres along with at least two medical officers for every primary health centre who work as a substitute 24x7.

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