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Konferencijos tezės

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Assessing the quality of services in primary care: patients' point of view

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Background. Primary health care (PHC) services are essential for improving people's physical, mental, and social well-being [1]. The evaluation of the quality of PHC services is a multilevel process that includes significant aspects such as accessibility, patient satisfaction and continuity of services [2]. Assessing patient satisfaction is crucial for evaluating healthcare effectiveness, improving service quality, and ensuring better health outcomes for patients [3].

The aim of the study – to assess primary care service quality from patients' perspectives across multiple dimensions.

Methods. A quantitative study, anonymous questionnaire survey. An adapted Service Quality Questionnaire (SERVQUAL) was used to assess the quality of services. Study involved 378 patients of one Vilnius PHC institution, most of them were women (68.3%). 38.9% of patients were aged 25–34 years. Statistical data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS 23.0 and MS Excel.

Results. It was found that the highest patients' expectations of PHC services were related to dimensions of assurance (4.605 ± 0.643 ; $p < 0.001$) and responsiveness (4.558 ± 0.708 ; $p < 0.001$), while the lowest were related to dimensions of empathy (4.438 ± 0.788 ; $p < 0.001$) and tangibles (4.353 ± 0.858 ; $p < 0.001$). The quality of actually experienced services did not meet patients' expectations in all dimensions: only the assurance (4.335 ± 0.785 ; $p < 0.001$) and empathy (4.163 ± 0.884 ; $p < 0.001$) dimensions had higher scores, while the tangibles (4.104 ± 0.942 ; $p < 0.001$), reliability (4.095 ± 0.926 ; $p < 0.001$) and responsiveness (4.103 ± 0.935 ; $p < 0.001$) were the lowest areas of the patient's perceptions. Service quality significantly differed between expectations and experiences (-0.326 ± 1.184 ; $p < 0.001$). The largest discrepancies were found in the dimensions of responsiveness (-0.454 ± 1.173 ; $p < 0.001$) and reliability (-0.433 ± 1.173 ; $p < 0.001$). These discrepancies highlight issues in punctuality, staff accessibility, and attention to patients' preferences and social status.

Conclusions. Patients' expectations surpass their experiences in all dimensions of PHC service quality, particularly regarding punctuality, responsiveness, and accessibility. Services lack individual attention and empathy toward patients' specific needs and social status, highlighting a systemic need to enhance PHC efficiency and quality.

Literature

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