

Patients' assessment on quality of care in Traditional Medicine Hospitals: A multicenter survey

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Abstract

Background: The success of a health care organization depends on the patients' perception of health care quality because this factor particularly affects the patient satisfaction. This study was conducted 1) to assess the quality of care provided at traditional medicine hospitals from patients' perspectives, and 2) to determine the gaps in quality of care in traditional medicine hospitals between expectations and perceptions of patients using an SERVQUAL tool.

Methods: This study was a cross-sectional study using a mixed-method design and it was conducted in 2017 at different levels of Traditional Medicine Hospitals, such as 100-bedded, 50-bedded, 25-bedded and 16-bedded which are providing health care to the people with traditional medicines and practices such as Myanmar Massotherapies' and Panchakarma therapy etc. The quantitative data was collected by face-to-face interview with a total 231 patients and 23 attendants using the SERVQUAL (Service Quality) tool. In-depth interviews were conducted with nine patients from different levels of Traditional Medicine Hospitals.

Results: The gap scores between perceptions and expectations were mostly negative, indicating that the patients' expectation was significantly higher than that of perception ($p < 0.05$). The items with the largest gaps scores (i.e. wider gap between patients' expectation and perception) were: availability of X-ray room and laboratory test room, support provided for the hospital staff from the hospital to do their jobs well, availability of modern equipment, giving instructions about treatment procedures and cleanliness of latrines. In some items like "hospital staff was polite", "hospital staff did their best to make treatment pain free" and "hospital staff gives patients personal attention", patients' expectation and perception did not have much difference. Qualitative results showed they feel unsatisfied with lack of cleanliness in the hospital, lack of laboratory and imaging facilities, inadequate toilets, basins, patients' bed, cupboards and wheelchairs, and inadequate explanation about treatment procedures by health providers. However, most of respondents satisfied with good behavior of the providers who were nice, friendly and polite.

Conclusion: The results showed regarding the service quality provided at the Traditional Medicine Hospitals, the patients' perception was lower than that of expectation in all five dimensions such as tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy and reliability, meaning that the respondents perceived the quality of hospital care is needed to improve in such dimensions. Health providers need to be trained to be more aware of the needs of their patients and to improve their communication skill as well as their disease management skills.