



EVALUATION OF PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH HEALTH SERVICES IN UNIVERSITY DENTISTRY CLINICAL CENTER OF KOSOVO, EUROPE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to assess the level of the satisfaction among patients with dental health services provided by University Dentistry Clinical Center of Kosovo (UDCCK). This study was conducted among 150 patients. Their satisfaction regarding the quality of health care service was assessed by measuring instrument - questionnaire. Descriptive and qualitative data were analyzed using Chi-square test and Fisher's exact test. The significance level was set up at $p < 0.05$. Study sample was compromised by 57.3% of females and 42.7% of males. Ages of patients' were between 18 to 65 years. According to the residence, 52.0% of respondents were from urban areas and 48.0% were from rural areas. From the obtained results, we found that 98.0% of patients are agreed with dentists' services, 68.7% agreed with nurses' behavior, 99.3% of patients agreed with physical facilities and 94.7% agreed with administration service. According to the results of this study, over 90% of the patients were satisfied with the dental health services offered at UDCCK.

KEYWORDS: *dental care, patient satisfaction, UDCCK*



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INTRODUCTION

The practice and system of health care services have evolved over centuries. Health is important for everybody, and it is necessary to be maintained at all the time even though the people are healthy.¹ The major goal in every health organization is patient satisfaction, and the assessment of patient satisfaction is an essential part of the assessment of health care services in terms of quality of service and responsiveness to health care systems.^{2,3} Kotler defined satisfaction as a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance or outcome, in relation to his or her expectations.⁴ Quality of care has a subjective profile, but on the other hand, patient satisfaction tends to have an objective profile and determinant, which is patient's subjection.⁵ The communication of dentist-patient is very important not only for patient satisfaction but also for the quality of care and this can influence the future utilization of the service.⁶ Communication skills have shown to be an important component in limiting patient dissatisfaction (explaining the disease, dental treatment, and confidentiality of medical records).^{7,8} Assessment of health care services by patients could help decision makers with effective planning, and monitor healthcare performance of medical professionals.^{9,10} In dentistry, the patient satisfaction can help to locate the strengths and weaknesses of dental services and assisting in elevating the quality of treatment.¹¹ Patient satisfaction depends on the structure, process, and consequences of care, as well as social, demographic, physical and psychological factors. Other contributing factors are doctor-patient communication, treatment costs, physical environment and facilities offered by health care centers.¹² The quality of medical services could be perceived through the level of patient satisfaction and success rate of treatments. Satisfaction is a key element in obtaining desirable patient outcomes and preventing disease consequences. In addition, it is one of the main goals of therapeutic activities and a significant indicator of the quality of health care. Patient satisfaction leads to several benefits, such as improving the interaction between physician and patient, providing the required information to enhance health care programs, and obtaining feedbacks from patients about the performance of medical staff.^{8,13} Also, physicians and nurses are trained to consider the patient's quality of care and life.¹⁴ The aim of this study was to assess the level of the satisfaction among patients with dental health services provided by University Dentistry Clinical Center of Kosovo (UDCCK). The UDCCK is the main health, education and research institution for dentistry in Kosovo, founded in 1975. The main mission is an integration of these three core activities for maintaining

and improving the oral health among patients in Kosovo, structured by nine different departments.¹⁵

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional study was conducted in University Dentistry Clinical Center of Kosovo, during the period of June 2016 to December 2016. This was the first study conducted at the University for measuring the level of patient satisfaction among 150 patients who asked for different dental treatments in UDCCK. Their satisfaction regarding the quality of health care service was assessed by –a questionnaire. The modified questionnaire for measuring the criteria affecting patients' satisfaction was based on Mandokhail AK.¹⁶ Study participants were randomly selected based on gender and age. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the UDCCK (Prot. Nr. 88/2016). Informed consent was obtained from each subject participating in this study. A pilot study was conducted on 15 patients to pre-test the data collection methods and the questionnaire. Patients were asked whether they had any difficulties answering and understanding the questions. All items were understood easily without any difficulties and were finalized without changes. The questionnaire was distributed over a set period of time to all patients in the waiting rooms in dental clinics. Only 5 patients refused to participate in this study. The questionnaire was contained by 22 items which were divided into two sections: socio-demographic data and experiences with quality of dental service. The first section consisted 9 items about of general information: age, residence, gender, marital status, education, occupation, monthly family income, and a number of visits during year and payment methods. There were nine items with multiple choices. The second section consisted questions regarding patients experiences with dentists' services, nurses' services, physical facilities and administration. There were thirteen questions, separated into four parts, and they had only two rating scales: agreed and disagreed. The first part was related to experience with dentists' services which were consisted with three questions. The second part was related to experiences with nurses' services consisted by four questions. The third part of the questionnaire was related to experiences with physical facilities consisted by four questions as well. And the last fourth part of the questionnaire was related to experiences with administration services which were consisted by two questions. Inclusion criteria for this study were: patient age from 18-65 years old, which was willing to give consent for participating in this study. The exclusion criteria for this study were; patients below 18 years old, mentally handicapped, patients who needed emergency attention and those who were refused to participate in this study and unfinished questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE

EVALUATION OF PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH HEALTH SERVICES IN UNIVERSITY DENTISTRY CLINICAL CENTER OF KOSOVO

This questionnaire was constructed with the purpose of finding the patient satisfaction level based on the healthcare services provided by UDCCK.

Do you agree for answering the questions bellow? Yes No

No:..... Date:...../...../.....

1st Section - Socio-demographic characteristics of patients

Please tick (✓) in the box that is appropriate for you.

- 1. Gender : Male Female
- 2. Age : 18-30 31-40 41-50 51-65
- 3. Residence : Urban Rural
- 4. Marital status : Single Married Widowed/Separated
- 5. Education : Primary Secondary High School Post-graduates
- 6. Occupation : Student Unemployed Employed
- 7. Monthly family income : Until 100€ Until 200€ 200-400€ Above 500€
- 8. Number of visits during year : 2-4 times More than 4 times
- 9. Payment methods : I am exempt from paying Personal finance

2nd Section- Experience with dentists, nurses, physical facilities and administration services

Please tick (✓) in the box that is appropriate for you.

Experiences with dentist's services

- | | Agree | Disagree |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 10. Dentists understand your concern | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Dentists explained the procedure before treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Dentists discussed with you for your health problems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Experiences with nurses' services

- | | Agree | Disagree |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 13. Nurse welcomed you with respect | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Nurse listened and answered to your complaints | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Nurse prepared you for the treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Nurses' are correctly and in time for consultation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Experiences with physical facilities

- | | Agree | Disagree |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 17. Clinic location is easy to find | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Clinic is clean and tidy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. There are enough waiting chairs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Waiting room is spacious, bright and airy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Experiences with administration services

- | | Agree | Disagree |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 21. Administration staff warmly welcomed you and told you where to go | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Administration staff are correctly and came on time for you | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Suggestions or Comments

Thank you for your answers

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data were coded and keyed into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software version 22 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL) used in Windows 7. Chi-square test and Fisher's exact test were performed to statistically analyze descriptive and qualitative data. The significance level was set up at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

In total, 150 patients completed the questionnaires in this study. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1. The information included age groups, gender, marital status, education, occupation, monthly family income, and the number of visits during the year and the payment methods. This study was aimed to find the level of patient satisfaction in UDCK based on best criteria. It was important to find out the possible correlation between the independent and dependent variables. The gender distribution was shown in Table 1. The respondent's ages were divided into four age groups. The highest proportion of the patients 28.7% was the age group between 31-40 years, followed by the 41-50 years age group 28.0%, whereas 26.0% of the patients were between 18-30 years old, and 17.3% were between 51-

65 years old. Comparing residence, 52.0% of the respondents were from urban areas and 48.0% were from rural areas. From all respondents 72.7% were married, 26.0% were single and 1.3% were widowed / separated. Concerning education, most of the respondents, 49.3% had a secondary school, followed by 27.3% with the university degree, 18.0% primary school, and only 5.3% were post-graduates. Based on occupation the respondents were divided into three groups: student, unemployed and employed. The highest percentages were unemployed 46.7%, 39.3% were employed and 14.0% of the respondents were students. Monthly family incomes were classified into four categories. Only 12.7% declared income above 500 Euro. The majority of respondents 30.7%, declares family income from 200-400 Euro. 28.0% of respondents declared family income until 200 Euro and 28.7% of them declared family income until 100 Euro. The number of visits during the year was divided into two categories. From the total respondents, 58.7% have visited hospital 2 to 4 times during the year, whereas 41.3% have visited the hospital more than 4 times during the year. Regarding the payments, more than half of the respondents, 72.7% were exempted from payment, while another 27.3% were using on their own personal finance.

Table1
Socio-demographic characteristics of patients

	Gender				Total		Test P-value
	M		F		N	%	
Gender	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Age							
18-30	20	31.3	19	22.1	39	26.0	
31-40	17	26.6	26	30.2	43	28.7	
41-50	16	25.0	26	30.2	42	28.0	
51-65	11	17.2	15	17.4	26	17.3	
Residence							
Urban	32	50.0	46	53.5	78	52.0	$X^2=0.06$
Rural	32	50.0	40	46.5	72	48.0	$P=0.79$
Marital status							
Single	20	31.2	19	22.1	39	26.0	$X^2=0.06$ $P=0.79$
Married	44	68.8	65	75.6	109	72.7	
Widowed/Separated	-	-	2	2.3	2	1.3	
Education							
Primary	11	17.2	16	18.6	27	18.0	$X^2=0.06$ $P=0.79$
Secondary	30	46.9	44	51.2	74	49.3	
High School	21	32.8	20	23.3	41	27.3	
Post-graduates	2	3.1	6	7.0	8	5.3	
Occupation							
Student	9	14.1	12	14.0	21	14.0	$X^2=0.429$ $P=0.513$
Unemployed	31	48.4	39	45.3	70	46.7	
Employed	24	37.5	35	40.7	59	39.3	
Monthly family income							
Until 100€	22	34.4	21	24.4	43	28.7	$X^2=0.427$ $P=0.513$
Until 200€	19	29.7	23	26.7	42	28.0	
200-400€	17	26.6	29	33.7	46	30.7	
Above 500€	6	9.4	13	15.1	19	12.7	
Number of visits during year							
2-4 times	40	62.5	48	55.8	88	58.7	$X^2=0.429$
More than 4 times	24	37.5	38	44.2	62	41.3	$P=0.513$
Payment methods							
I am exempted from paying	46	71.9	63	73.3	109	72.7	$X^2=0.00$
Personal finance	18	28.1	23	26.7	41	27.3	$P=0.998$

Table 2
Experiences with dentists' services, based on gender

Dentists' services	Modality	Gender				Fisher Test		P-value
		M		F		N	%	
		N	%	N	%			
Total		64	100.0	86	100.0	150	100.0	
Dentists understand your concern	Agree	60	93.8	84	97.7	144	96.0	P=0.402
	Disagree	4	6.3	2	2.3	6	4.0	
Dentists explained the procedure before treatment	Agree	63	98.4	84	97.7	147	98.0	P=0.999
	Disagree	1	1.6	2	2.3	3	2.0	
Dentists discuss with you for your health problems	Agree	60	93.3	85	98.8	145	96.7	P=0.164
	Disagree	4	6.3	1	1.2	5	3.3	

With the reference to dentists' services, 96.0% of the respondents agreed that dentists understand their concern. 98.0% of them were in agreeing that the dentists explain the procedure of their treatments needs. Hence, 96.7% of the respondents had agreed that the dentists discuss with them about their health problems (Table 2). Based on gender and dentists' service there were found no significant difference. The components

related to nurses' service consisted four items. From all respondents, 68.7% agreed that the nurse has well behaviors with them. 60.0% of the respondent assumed that the nurses have listened and answered to their complaints, and in time for consultation. Whereas 63.3% of them agreed that nurses prepared them for treatment. Based on gender females were more in agreement than males concerning the nurses' service (Table 3).

Table 3
Experiences with nurses' services, based on gender

Nurses' services	Modality	Gender				Test		P-value
		M		F		N	%	
		N	%	N	%			
Total		64	100.0	86	100.0	150	100.0	
Nurse welcomed you with respect	Agree	39	60.9	64	74.4	103	68.7	$\chi^2 = 2.504$ P=0.113
	Disagree	25	39.1	22	25.6	47	31.3	
Nurse listened and answered to your complaints	Agree	38	59.4	52	60.5	90	60.0	$\chi^2 = 0.001$ P=0.973
	Disagree	26	40.6	34	39.5	60	40.0	
Nurse prepared you for the treatment	Agree	39	60.9	56	65.1	95	63.3	$\chi^2 = 0.125$ P=0.723
	Disagree	25	39.1	30	34.9	55	36.7	
Nurses' are correctly and in time for consultation	Agree	36	56.3	54	62.8	90	60.0	$\chi^2 = 0.409$ P=0.522
	Disagree	28	43.8	32	37.2	60	40.0	

The majority of respondents 99.3%, concerning physical facilities, mentioned that the finding location of the clinic was easy and the clinic is clean and tidy. 97.3% of the respondents have agreed that the waiting room had enough waiting chairs, and 98.0% were in agree that waiting room is spacious, bright and airy (Table 4). In administration section, the majority of respondents

94.7% said the administration staff warmly welcomed them and directed them clearly where they have to go. Besides, 91.3% of the respondents have agreed that the administration staff was correctly and they come on time for them (Table 4). Based on gender females were more in agreement than males concerning administration services.

Table 4
Experiences with physical facilities and administration services, based on gender

Physical facilities and registration services	Modality	Gender				Fisher test		P-value
		M		F		N	%	
		N	%	N	%			
Total		64	100.0	86	100.0	150	100.0	
Clinic location is easy to find	Agree	63	98.4	86	100.0	149	99.3	P=0.999
	Disagree	1	1.6	-	-	1	0.7	
Clinic is clean and tidy	Agree	64	100.0	85	98.8	149	99.3	P=0.999
	Disagree	-	-	1	1.2	1	0.7	
There are enough waiting chairs	Agree	61	95.3	85	98.8	146	97.3	P=0.313
	Disagree	3	4.7	1	1.2	4	2.7	
Waiting room is spacious, bright and airy	Agree	64	100.0	83	96.5	147	98.0	P=0.261
	Disagree	-	-	3	3.5	3	2.0	
Administration staff warmly welcomed you and told you where to go	Agree	59	92.2	83	96.5	142	94.7	P=0.287
	Disagree	5	7.8	3	3.5	8	5.3	
Administration staff are correctly and came on time for you	Agree	55	85.9	82	95.3	137	91.3	P=0.07
	Disagree	9	14.1	4	4.7	13	8.7	

DISCUSSION

In our cross-sectional study, we tried to assess the level of the satisfaction of patients with dental health services and quality of dental health care provided by University Dentistry Clinical Center. We have evaluated the correlation between the satisfaction of dental health care and factors: socio-demographic characteristics (gender) and experiences patients with dentists' services, nurses' services, physical facilities, and administration services. In the present study, we have found the statistically significant relationship between the satisfaction of health care users and some socio-demographic characteristics. Dental satisfaction scale was in relation to gender, male patients were less satisfied with the care provided than females. Our findings indicate satisfaction patterns similar to the previous study.¹⁶ Furthermore, patient satisfaction has been investigated in many other countries in different University Clinics. Similar to our study the patients who were visited University Dental Clinics were in same ages. Additionally, the most important reason for attending in those clinics was the low cost of offered of health services.^{17,18} In our study, most of the patients 72.7% have been exempted from payment regarding their dental treatments. This should be considered as one of the reasons why our clinic is frequented by many patients. Certain of patients' categories and their dental treatments are free of charge which has been permitted by the rules set by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kosovo. Our findings concerning patient satisfaction about the physical facilities were similar to the study conducted by Patel.¹⁹ According to our study, 99.3% of the patients were in agree that the clinic is cleaned and tidy. Similar results were found in other studies.^{6,20} Based on the literature, dentist - patient relationship is the most significant parameter affecting patient satisfaction; in other words, the highest priority of patients is to be treated with respect and politeness by nurses and physicians. Also, communication of dentist, explanations of the procedures before the treatment, is one of the important features regarding the patient-dentist satisfaction.^{21,22} This is very significant in the expectations to teach dental students how important communication patient-dentist interaction is.^{21,22} Rankin & Harris reported that patients have an aversion to a dentist who begun treatments without any prior explanation, and the patients are sensitive to dentists' behaviors.²³ In the present study, patients were satisfied with experiences with dentists' services more than in other studies. Patient trust and overall satisfaction with the attention of physicians were reported to be the most significant indicators of patient satisfaction, especially when dentists discuss with patients' health problems.^{19,24} Our results were similar with reported results in other studies. On the other hand, our findings on the topic of to dentists' services and procedure explanations prior to the dental treatments, showed

higher satisfaction compared to studies in other countries.^{21,25} Our results concerning the nurses' services showed that the females were more pleased than males, similar to another study.²⁵ But our results concerning overall nurses' satisfaction were lower compared to other studies.^{24,26} Further, in our study patients satisfaction with administration service were greater than 90.0%, compared to other studies.^{24,26} There are a number of limitations of this study. One of the limitations of the current study was selection bias, as we only evaluated accessible patients. An additional limitation of the present study was the small sample size; consequently, we could not explore the association between patient satisfaction and several other factors. Interviewing all visitors is a more reliable unconventional for the truthful assessment of patient satisfaction. It should be noted also that the results of this study are valid only for the group of patients participating in this study and not for the entire dental patient population of the Kosovo. Hence, the study did not determine the association between service quality dimensions, and overall satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Our study was conducted for the first time in a University Dental Clinic in Kosovo, and though our findings are of great importance to assess the quality of service measurement. The results indicated that the majority of patients were satisfied with the dentists', nurses', and the physical and administration service. No other background factors such as age, gender, education and occupation appeared for influencing patient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction significantly depended on empathetic services such as dentist and nursing care, respectfulness and helpful of dentists and nurses, and attentiveness of doctors to patients. The level of comfort in the waiting room also had a great influence on patient satisfaction. The dentist should not only be focused on finishing the treatment as fast as possible just to minimize the waiting time, but also concentrate on the explanation of the treatment as well as the treatment options to the patient, to their satisfaction. Patient satisfaction is an approach, and is only an indirect or a substitute indicator of the quality of a doctor or hospital performance.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest declared none.

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