

SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: A STUDY OF SELECTED PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN JAFFNA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Patient satisfaction is an important measure of service quality in health care systems. Patients' perceptions about health care systems seem to have been largely ignored by health care managers in developing countries. Patients' voice must begin to play a greater role in the design of health care service delivery processes in the developing countries. It should go without saying that customers are the lifeblood of all organizations, yet few companies seem to be fully capable of matching their performances to the needs of their customers, either in quality, efficiency or personal service. We have to recognize that improving quality to our customers is not a matter of choice. This study is, therefore, patient-centered and identifies the service quality factors that are important to patients; it also examines their links to patient satisfaction in the context of Jaffna district in Sri Lanka. The present study is made to find out that, how far the service quality dimensions impact on the patient satisfaction. A questionnaire was developed and a total of 250 patients in 5 different hospitals participated.

Evaluations were obtained from patients on dimensions of perceived service quality including tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurances, empathy, and communication. Using factor analysis and multiple regressions, significant associations were found between the six dimensions and patient satisfaction, and all of these six dimensions of service quality have a significant impact on patient satisfaction. In the case of personal characteristics, there were a significant difference among the age and educational groups, while no significant difference between gender, marital status and professional groups. Outcome of the study is to be beneficial to policy makers, researchers, academicians and planners of the concern area.