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Ocena i stosunek do hospitalizacji w wybranych szpitalach województwa śląskiego w opinii społeczeństwa

Assesment and attitude to hospitalization among selected hospitals in Silesia region in public opinion

Streszczenie

Wstęp. Ideą działalności większości placówek opieki zdrowotnej jest jakość świadczonych usług medycznych oraz zadowolenie pacjenta, co ma istotne znaczenie podczas przedłużającego się leczenia szpitalnego.

Cel. W pracy poddano analizie opinie respondentów dotyczące hospitalizacji w województwie śląskim.

Material i metody. Badania przeprowadzono metodą anonimowej ankietyzacji za pomocą kwestionariusza opracowanego przez autorów. Badaniu poddano 193 osoby, 84 mężczyzn i 109 kobiet.

Wyniki. Najczęściej hospitalizowane były kobiety powyżej 60 r.ż. – 81% i mężczyźni w wieku 45-60 lat – 71%. Najbardziej usatysfakcjonowani z pobytu w szpitalu byli pacjenci w wieku 45-60, z czego mężczyźni znacznie bardziej niż kobiety (84% mężczyźni, 57% kobiety). Leczenie operacyjne dotyczyło głównie kobiet i mężczyzn powyżej 60 r.ż. – 86% kobiet i 75% mężczyzn, co nie powodowało u nich większego stresu niż u pozostałych ankietowanych. Istotny stres związany z leczeniem szpitalnym towarzyszył osobom nigdy wcześniej niehospitalizowanym, co wynikało głównie z obawy przed leczeniem operacyjnym oraz bólem towarzyszącym chorobie. Ponad połowa wszystkich ankietowanych ocenia personel medyczny jako miły i rzetelnie wykonujący swoje obowiązki.

Wnioski. Pacjenci, którzy w przeszłości byli leczeni szpitalnie, pozytywniej oceniają personel medyczny i warunki socjalno-bytowe w szpitalach niż osoby niehospitalizowane. Stres związany z pobytem w szpitalu u wszystkich respondentów wynika z lęku przed leczeniem operacyjnym, bólem towarzyszącym chorobie oraz warunkami socjalno-bytowymi. Mniej niż połowa ankietowanych z każdej grupy wiekowej, ocenia bardzo pozytywnie porządek i higienę w szpitalu.

Abstract

Introduction. The purpose of majority of health care institutions is providing the patients with comfort and the quality of the medical services, which is especially important during prolonged hospitalization.

Aim. The study presents an analysis of the hospitalization assessment in Silesia Region in public opinion among 4 age groups.

Material and methods. The research was carried out by anonymous polling of 193 people including 109 women and 84 men.

Results. The results indicate that majority of the hospitalized are women in the age over 60 and men from the third age group (45-60). The best impressions associated with hospital treatment were given by the respondents aged 45-60, but men were more satisfied than women (84%, 57%). Surgical treatment was experienced by the biggest number of respondents over 60 years (86% – women, 75% – men) and it wasn't related with stronger stress. Significant stress was correlated with hospital treatment among patients who had never been hospitalized before and it was generated by fear of surgery and pain. More than a half of all the questioned subjects consider the medical staff as nice and with a sense of duty.

Conclusion. To sum up, the people who had been hospitalized before gave a more-positive opinion about the hospital personnel and social conditions. The stress was mainly connected with the anxiety of surgical treatment, pain and social conditions. Less than a half of all respondents from each group estimated the order and hygienic conditions choosing the most bulleted answer.

Słowa kluczowe: hospitalizacja, zadowolenie pacjenta, ocena.

Keywords: hospitalization, patient's satisfaction, opinion.

INTRODUCTION

Polish hospitals offer an increasing number of diagnostic and therapeutic possibilities, the comfort and satisfaction of every patient is being still emphasized, but despite intensive efforts, the society is being more and more demanding against the health care system and it is not easy to fulfill all the expectations posed by patients.

The purpose of majority of health care institutions is providing the patients with comfort and the quality of medical services, which is especially important during prolonged hospitalization. Therefore hospitalized patients should be taken under particular medical protection, and mental support and peace, and proper hospital conditions should be ensured.

The contemporary medical service market is formed by the patients, who express their own expectations, opinions so that the service provider is obliged to adapt to those expectations by satisfying the patients and finally allowing them to survive in the medical market. The satisfaction of the patients is inextricably involved with the quality of the services, and what's more, the level of this contentment mirrors the quality of the service.

The availability to medical benefits, the proceeding of medical appointment and final improvement of health condition have the biggest influence on patients' satisfaction [1].

In 2001 the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) presented test results about personnel's attitude to patients in health care institutions. The opinions referring to the medical staff were positive and more favorable comparing to the administrative staff. More than 60% patients claimed that they had always been treated well, 36% affirmed that they had been usually treated politely and with respect, 73% maintained that they had never felt embarrassed due to the fact of somebody's presence during the medical appointment, whereas 67% of the questioned said that all the examinations and medical tests had always been conducted with respect to patients' intimacy [2].

For a couple of years the number of patients has not decreases, but still keeps growing, what is undoubtedly involved with an increasing average society's life expectancy. The hospitals and other health care institutions have a lot of restrictions, especially in financial and personnel attribution and this definitely doesn't go hand in hand with fulfilling the patient's needs.

An important issue in health care system assessment is the accessibility to medical care. Long queues of patients waiting for the specialist treatment, long-term medical appointments and difficulties in getting appointment to General Practitioner are significant parts in composing the general picture of health care system in Poland.

Test results conducted in 2005 by Public Opinion Research Center showed that almost 60% of Polish people expressed dissatisfaction connected with health care system, only one-fifth of respondents were satisfied, and 17% had an ambivalent opinion in this subject [3].

Similar studies in connection with the opinion about health care system in Poland were performed in 2010. One

more time it was presented that the access to medical benefits constituted the serious problem as a fundamental part of the quality of the medical service. Three fourths of the respondents (75%) declared that they didn't have difficulties to get to GP and almost the same number of respondents (73%) claimed that they were usually treated well and friendly. At the same time merely little more than a half among the polled group (57%) gave a positive opinion in connection with the possibility of obtaining a specialist referral [4].

The patients are treated kindly, with respect, they describe the medical staff in the same way, but there is still a problem with long-term care and very often with an incomplete, selective transfer of information about health condition. However, the accessibility to medical services is supposed to be the basic issue and has the biggest impact on the attitude of the medical service quality.

Another issue are the hospitalized patients. Those people require a particular care, appropriate social conditions and they present totally different needs comparing with ambulatory patients. Moreover, hospital treatment is mostly prolonged and not rarely patients spend weeks or months in hospitals, what is normally connected with stress and breaking the mental balance. That is why those patients are under special surveillance related with bigger effort, understanding, patience and they expect concrete actions and behaviors, from the medical and administrative personnel and among the patients from each other.

It seems that not only the knowledge and experience has an influence on the quality of medical services but also of great value is the attitude to the patients and paying enough attention to them.

So if the patients feel respectable, well treated and they talk about the medical personnel in a positive way, and despite queues and long term specialist appointments, is it right to risk a statement that in general that patients are satisfied of current health care system?

AIM

The study is an analysis of the hospitalization assessment in Silesia Region in public opinion among 4 age groups.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was carried out by anonymous polling of 193 people including 109 women and 84 men in 4 selected Health Care Institutions in Silesia Region. The questionnaire was prepared individually by the authors and it was composed of 19 closed questions which were shared in 2 parts: the first one was destined for those, who had been hospitalized in the past, and the second part was for those people who had never been treated in hospital. However, the hospitalized respondents filled out the second part too (complete form).

The polled were selected in 4 age groups: I group – 18-25 years, II group – 26-45 years, III groups – 46-60 years, IV group – >60 years. Initial calculations showed that 67% constituted the persons who had already been hospitalized in the past and 33% were those, who had never been treated in a hospital.

RESULTS

The results concerned the attitude and the level of respondents' satisfaction due to hospitalization. Mostly discussed was the assessment of medical personnel, social conditions, hygiene and order in hospitals. The respondents were also asked about the stress connected with hospitalization and what are the principal factors that cause the stress and anxiety.

The results indicated that the majority of hospitalized were the women aged over 60 and the men from the third group (45-60). People from the first group (18-25 years) were mainly hospitalized only once, mostly for one week, and the patients from other age groups were twice or three times in the hospital, for maximum 3 weeks. Mostly the patients were in 3-4-person rooms.

The first part of the questionnaire was described by the respondents, who had already been hospitalized in the past. The best impressions associated with hospital treatment were given by the respondents aged 45-60, whereas men were more satisfied than women (84%, 57%). The least satisfied were the women aged 18-25 years (23.5%) and the men over 60 years (37%). The answers from other age groups were similar.

The next step was the assessment of the medical personnel. Over half of the answers were positive, because more than 50% of the patients described the medical staff as nice and reliable, especially the men from the third (100%) and fourth (81.3%) age group. On the contrary, women from younger age groups (I – 59%, II – 78%) presented more positive opinion.

The hygiene and order in hospitals were assessed differently. Only little more than a half of hospitalized patients determined hospitals as clean and tidy. There were more negative opinions in female population, but along with the women's age the assessments were getting better (I – 17.1%, II – 22%, III – 24%, IV – 57%). This regularity was not observed among men (I – 54%, II – 37%, III – 59%, IV – 37.5%).

Hospital treatment, the fact of surgery or even eventuality of staying in a hospital is related with stress and anxiety. Surgical treatment was experienced by the biggest number of respondents over 60 years (86% – women, 75% – men) and it was not related with stronger stress. But despite of the stress connected with surgical treatment (49%) and accompanying pain (51%), the respondents were afraid of the loneliness (36%) and other patients' behavior (37%) (Figure 1).

Significant stress was correlated with hospital treatment among patients who had never been hospitalized before and it was generated by fear of surgery (56%) and pain (60%). What is more, those respondents marked hospital food (47%) and unhygienic conditions (62%) as stressful (Figure 2).

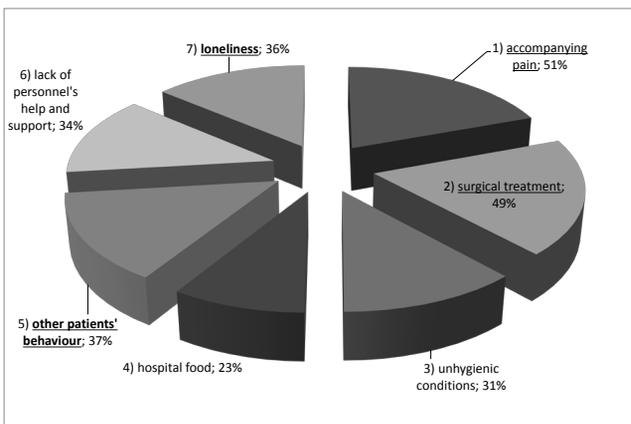


FIGURE 1. Causes of experiencing stress related with the eventuality of hospitalization in the future in opinion of hospitalized patients. (underlined – the most frequent answers; in **bold** – differences between answers among hospitalized and not hospitalized patients.)

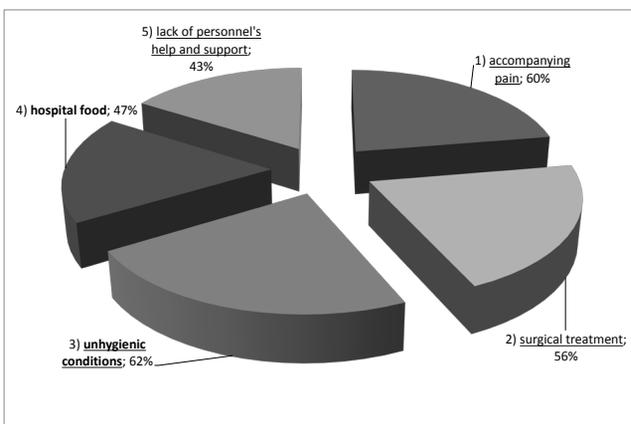


FIGURE 2. Causes of experiencing stress related with the eventuality of hospitalization in the future in opinion of not hospitalized patients. (underlined – the most frequent answers; in **bold** – differences between answers among hospitalized and not hospitalized patients.)

More than a half of all the respondents from every age group consider the medical staff as nice and with a sense of duty. More positive answers were given by hospitalized patients and the older the patients were, the better opinion they gave, especially in male population (Table 1). Similar results were associated with social conditions, which were assessed as sufficient. Better opinions were observed among hospitalized patients.

TABLE 1. Medical personnel assessment – described as nice and reliable.

Age group	Respondents hospitalized in the past		Respondents not hospitalized in the past	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
IV	57%	81%	56%	68%
III	48%	100%	14%	40%
II	17%	64%	11%	0%
I	12%	54%	13%	30%

On the contrary, patients were not satisfied with the hygiene and order in hospitals. Less than 40% of all answers were positive and among not hospitalized respondents the opinions are even more unfavorable (Table 2).

TABLE 2. The assessment of hygiene and order in hospitals.

Age group	Respondents hospitalized in the past		Respondents not hospitalized in the past	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
IV	24%	19%	20%	38%
III	10%	34%	0%	30%
II	17%	37%	0%	0%
I	0%	23%	13%	20%

DISCUSSION

The results of this research contributed to collecting significant information about the assessment of the hospitalization and the patients' satisfaction connected with the organization of healthcare institutions. Most of the answers were positive.

Żakowska et al. presents similar results. According to her investigations, men assessed the medical care in hospitals more positive than women (52.1% and 47.8% respectively). The authors indicated that the most satisfied patients were those aged 51-70 (44.9 %) and over 70 years (18.7%). More than a half of the youngest patients (below 30 years) gave unfavorable answers in this subject. Those results are parallel to our research, where the level of satisfaction was highest among the older respondents (45-60 years) and particularly in male population. Moreover, people, who had been hospitalized in the past described the health care system in a more positive way comparing to not hospitalized patients (65.3% vs. 34.6%) [5].

Also in research conducted by Smolińska et al. the medical personnel was assessed positively: in over 90% when it comes about nursing staff and over 80% when it comes about doctors. In general, the patients were satisfied with the medical care during the hospitalization [6].

The results of the research performed in Medical Care Center in Jarosław, on the basis of the NSNS questionnaire (Newcastle Satisfaction Nursing Scale), presented the assessment of general medical care and the level of patient's satisfaction about nursing care [7]. Both the medical services and patient's impression during the hospitalization were determined positively (76.8% and 87.3% respectively) and corresponding with our results.

Positive results may be also observed in the research carried out by Wasilewski, using hospital satisfaction scale. The vast majority of patients affirmed positive opinion in relation to hospital accommodation, guaranteed hygiene, sleep and rest conditions. A large number of investigated people emphasized nursing care [8].

Kapała and Skrobisz analyzed the patient's needs in regard to medical personnel and conditions in surgical ward in Regional Hospital in Poznań. According to those results, the patients expect intelligible communication with the doctor, clear information and successful surgical treatment. Almost one third of the patients insisted on obtaining sufficient information connected with the complications after surgery. On the other hand, from the nursing personnel they expect mostly manual and communication skills, readiness and also kindness and care.

Hospitalized patients would like to stay in small rooms for 2 or 3 persons [9]. In our research the patients declared that most of all they were placed in 3 and 4 – person rooms.

Szyszkowska also performed wide range of research concerning the level of hospital satisfaction in patient's opinion. General ward assessment was very positive. The respondents gave exceptionally good answers related with the neatness in the ward (92.4%) and the equipment in patients' rooms (93.5%). Negative opinions (6.5%) were connected with sleep and rest conditions and also with sanitary-hygienic standards (7.6%). Eighty-nine percent of the polled described positively the quality of the hospital food, the way it was served and the conditions of food consumption (81.5%). What is more, the results showed that the doctors seemed to be kind in patients' opinion (89.1%); they listened to the patients carefully (90.2%) and respected the patients' intimacy during the examination (82.6%). Giving information about the state of health and methods of treatment were also assessed positive (83.7% and 81.6% respectively). Definitely better opinions concerned nursing staff. The respondents pointed mainly to the kindness (96.7%), availability during day shift (96.7%), punctuality of medical administration (95.6%) and reaction time after patient's call (95.6%). Furthermore, positively described were such aspects as: possibility of visiting patients (97.8%), hospital telephone service (96.7 %), opportunity to shop in the hospital (92.4%), hospital priest (97.8%). Generally the respondents gave 91.3% of positive answers [10].

Those research results are comparable to ours, where hospitalized persons mostly expressed positive opinions about the stay in the hospital, what probably relates with a favorable assessment of the medical personnel and social conditions. Kapica, et al. in their investigation, consider the hospital satisfaction in patients' opinion. The studied persons confirmed that they got familiar with Patient's Rights Charter and Hospital Act Regulation, and their rights were abided [11].

Stachowicz in his research conducted in 2010 concerning the patients' opinion about hospitalization including medical staff care and hospital conditions, obtained results proving very high level of satisfaction. The respondents' satisfaction based mainly (83%) on attention paid by doctors. For 86% the amount of obtained information in relation to their health condition was sufficient and the considerable majority of the patients (94%) were satisfied with the professionalism provided by the doctor and his accessibility during duty hours (94%). Comparable positive results were shown regarding to the opinion about nursing staff and also similar when it comes to the assessment of social conditions, hygiene, cleanliness and order in hospitals (76%). Almost three fourth of the examined favorably assessed conditions to rest and 59% – the state of the equipment in the ward. The quality of hospital food and the respect to patient's rights (to the intimacy, respect for the dignity, contact with family and friends) were appraised highly by respondents – almost a 90% of positive replies [12].

Miller, et al. also analyzed the quality assessment of medical service among patients from hospitals in Mazovian region. The results confirmed the high level of hospitalized persons' satisfaction in relation to the benefits offered

by the hospital. Patients judged favorably the service offered by the hospital (73.7%), as well as conditions and course of the therapy and relations with the doctor (79.9%) and other medical staff (71.4%). The vast majority of patients stated that the doctor had been kind, nice and affable to them; in addition they assessed the doctor's attitude to the patient as exceptionally positive, and moreover 82.9% of the hospitalized announced that they had absolute confidence in the doctor. Analyzing the patients' opinions about sanitary conditions, using the toilets, showers and sharing the patient's rooms, the positive expressions are obviously observed. The hygiene, cleanness, equipment, comfort and technical condition of those rooms were located just under the upper limit of the score scale. Majority of the patients (85.4%) gave their opinion with recognition for the consent form before any treatment in the hospital. Similarly, in a positive way were assessed: communicating of information about health condition and the availability to this information. Predominant number of the examined declared that the information was truly understandable (76.7%), but almost all of the respondents didn't ask for the access to information. However the persons who turned for the disclosure of the information, in the straight majority (over 90%) got access to it [13].

In our research the evaluation of the transfer of information in doctor-patient relation, as well as understanding the information by patients was not performed, however this issue seems to have a great significance and in the future should be obviously taken into consideration. This problem is more and more often emphasized in many publications, not only because of the general assessment of patients' satisfaction related with treatment but on account of the legal point of view. The patients strongly pay attention to the amount and quality of transferring information about their health condition and the possibility of understanding it all and in many cases they are not pleased with the manner of providing the information. Particularly it refers to hospital patients who are not being in detail and clearly informed about the course of the treatment (surgeries, diagnostic and therapeutic treatment). Very often it is required from the patients to fill in a vast amount of documents and questionnaires without explaining the meaning. What is really important, the therapeutic process, is pushed into the background.

CBOS test results conducted in 2001 point that 55% of examined patients have always been satisfied of the range of given information regarding the health condition, 28% declared that they usually received accessible and understandable explanations. However 11% (every ninth patient) claimed that the information has never been sufficient. Over the half of the polled considered that all the information has always been intelligible to them, and those patients, who asked for additional clarifications, have always received it. In the same research carried out in 2001 the respondents were asked clearly about the consent to specific treatment during the hospitalization. Forty-two percent confirmed that they had been always asked for the consent, however almost one fifth of the examined announced that they had never been asked [14].

Acquainting with the patients' opinions and their expectations is an essential part of a high quality of medical services. The analysis of all the diagnostic and therapeutic actions

and paying attention to patients' remarks gives the possibility to indicate the gaps and shortcomings which should contribute to the improvement of the health care system. In spite of many critical comments or even evaluations with the type of accusations towards the medical personnel and the entire health care system, that are being published in media, it is still possible to come across positive expressions of the patients, found in different publications (connected with medical personnel, their professionalism, kindness, and helpfulness). However there is still the problem associated with the limited availability to medical benefits, long waiting time for specialist appointments, the issue of communicating the information about health condition and of getting from the patient the consent for the treatment, what undoubtedly projects on perceiving the health care system as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

1. A vast majority of the hospitalized patients positively assessed their stay in the hospital
2. People who had been hospitalized before gave a more-positive opinion about the medical personnel and social conditions comparing with respondents not hospitalized before.
3. The stress connected with the hospitalization was mainly related with the anxiety before surgical treatment, with accompanying pain and social conditions.
4. The differences between experiencing the stress among patients after surgical treatment and other respondents wasn't observed.
5. Less than a half of all respondents from each age group estimated the order an hygiene choosing the most bulleted answer.

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