**Background**

SERVQUAL approach suggests using expectation and perception which measure service quality gap. It is an enduring perception that predicts customer satisfaction with a service provider. There is strong correlation between service quality and patient satisfaction. Perception of satisfaction based on single question was not reliable while perception of satisfaction based on multiple questions is much more reliable as there are many questions used to gauge patient satisfaction.

**Method**

Findings reported in published and unpublished studies from the IHM were used. The studies were conducted in 69 hospitals (2008), and 28 hospitals in 2010. The number of respondents for each hospital was approximately 900, comprising of equal numbers of outpatients and inpatients (450 each). For inpatients, only those who had been admitted to the wards for at least 24 hours were included.

Self-administered 13 SERVQUAL questionnaire in the Malay and English language were used to measure patient satisfaction based on Service Quality Gap Tool (SERVQUAL) in five dimensions (Tangible, Reliable, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy). Questionnaires were distributed to patients by staff in the wards just before they were discharged or at the dispensary for outpatients. The questions were in two parts, with the first part focusing on patients’ expectations on five dimensions of service quality, while the second part asked for what they perceived as the quality of service received on the same areas. Quality expectations and perceptions were rated using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

Patient satisfaction was defined as having perceived service quality (as experienced) meeting or exceeding expected quality. Satisfaction (S) was computed by subtracting the score for Perceived Quality (Qp) from the score for Expected Quality (Qe) for each of the thirteen questions answered by each respondent. Satisfaction (S) was then derived for each of the questions, and computed for the five domain areas using summative average of questions under each domain. The proportion of respondents having S equal or more than zero was then derived, and this represented those that were satisfied (Figure 1).

Limitations of the study include the use of convenient sampling and self-administered questionnaire as well as low participation of hospitals in the study where only 28 out of 131 hospitals in the Ministry of Health participated in the 2010 study.

**Reference**


**Who is this for?**

- Policy Makers
- Hospital Directors
- Hospital personnel

**Purpose of this summary**

To inform policy makers, hospital directors and hospital personnel on the level of satisfaction of patients.

**Acknowledgement**

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**Conflict of interest:**

There is no conflict of interest.

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Patient Satisfaction in Government Hospitals
Summary of key findings

- Overall satisfaction for 2008 and 2010 respectively, based on:
  - Single satisfaction question increased from 94.9% to 95.9% and
  - Multiple questions/experienced perceptions increased from 88.6% to 90.7%.
  - Service quality gaps (SERVQUAL: Experienced perceptions-Expectations) increased from 38.5% and 40.5%.

- The three dimensions with highest improvements between 2010 and 2008 based on service quality gaps (SERVQUAL: Experienced perceptions-Expectations) (Fig:3) were:
  - Tangible
  - Reliable
  - Responsiveness.

- The three dimensions with lowest satisfaction based on service quality gaps as well as on experienced perceptions only between 2010 and 2008 (Fig:3 & Fig:4) were:
  - Tangible
  - Reliable
  - Responsiveness

- Patient satisfaction in Malaysia (IHM, 2010) is comparable with Singapore and UK (Fig: 6) whereby expectations exceed perceptions, but Malaysia seems to have the smallest mean differences (service quality gaps) for most dimensions. (Limitation: year of comparison)

Key considerations for policy makers and healthcare providers

- Service Quality Gaps have better diagnostic capabilities, while perception only measures service quality.
- Hospital management must improve on issues related to dimensions of Tangible, Reliable and Responsiveness.
- Hospital management needs to consider the requirement and opinion of patients to effect substantial change and significant improvement in the quality of their healthcare services.

- Figure 5 shows between 2008 to 2010, there were improvements in all corporate culture values based on service quality gaps. The highest proportion of satisfaction was for teamwork.
- In 2010, the proportions of satisfaction based on perceptions for caring, teamwork and professionalism were 88.6%, 86.9% and 88.9% respectively.

SERVQUAL uses mean differences (Perceived Perceptions – Expectations) to assess quality service gaps and can either be positive or negative.
- Figure 6 shows that all the mean differences have negative values indicating that they are all below expectations.

Figure 2: Patient satisfaction based on single question, multiple question and service quality by SERVQUAL approach, 2008 & 2010

Figure 3: All patient satisfaction based on SERVQUAL (experienced perception – expectation) 2008 & 2010

The proportion of patient satisfaction for all dimensions (SERVQUAL) (Fig. 3) was much lower than the proportion based on multiple questions/experienced perceptions (Fig. 4). This is because SERVQUAL measures service quality gaps (Experience perceptions – Expectations) while experienced perceptions only measure service quality.

Figure 4: All patient satisfaction based on experienced perception, 2008 & 2010

Figure 5: All patient perceived corporate culture values, 2008 & 2010 based on service quality gaps

Figure 6: Comparison of mean differences between patients’ expectations and perceptions using Service Quality Gap Tool (SERVQUAL) between Malaysia (2010), Singapore (2000) and United Kingdom (1995)
Method

This study used secondary data on patient satisfaction for 2011 obtained from hospitals, health and dental clinics which use different measurement tools.

Hospitals – Data from 25 of the 72 hospitals using SERVQUAL and fulfilled the study criteria were analysed. Sample size for each hospital is 450 inpatients and 450 outpatients. SERVQUAL KKM measures 8 dimensions (tangible, reliable, responsive, assurance, empathy, caring, teamwork and professionalism). Patients score their level of perceived or expected qualities based on a 5-point Likert scale.

Health Clinics – based on analysed Klinik Kawanku data from 762 out of 813 health clinics in the country, compiled by Family Health Development Division. This survey used self-administered questionnaire with a minimum of 100 respondents from each clinic. The standard for Klinik Kawanku status is having a score of 80% and above.

Dental Clinics – based on analysed data compiled by the Oral Health Services Division. The data was based on survey reports of dental clinics throughout the country using a self-administered questionnaire that measures patient’s reports of dental clinics throughout the country using a self-administered questionnaire that measures patient’s level of perceived or expected qualities based on a 5-point Likert scale.

Limitations

- Data extracted were already analysed and aggregated. Thus, further analysis could not be carried out.
- Data received from states are not standardised.

Reference

2. Family Health Development Division, Ministry of Health, Malaysia.
3. Oral Health Division, Ministry of Health, Malaysia.

Other articles are available upon request.

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To inform policy makers, hospital directors, health clinics officer incharge, dental clinics officer incharge and hospital personnel on the level of satisfaction of patients.

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Who is this for?
- Policy Makers
- Hospital Directors
- Health Clinics Officers Incharge
- Dental Clinics Officers Incharge
- Hospital Personnel

For MOH facilities, three tools are being used to measure patient satisfaction in 2011:-
- SERVQUAL (Service Quality) for hospitals
- Klinik Kawanku questionnaire for health clinics
- Dental satisfaction questionnaire for dental clinics

Key Messages

1. Hospital
   - SERVQUAL measures patient’s perceived satisfaction based on 3 approaches:
     - Single Question (overall satisfaction), 95.1%.
     - Multiple Questions, 92.2%.
     - Overall service quality (Experience perceptions-Expectations), 49.8%.

2. Health Clinics
   - Patient satisfaction based on Klinik Kawanku
     - 92.0% of health clinics throughout Malaysia achieved Klinik Kawanku status (80% and above).

3. Dental Clinics
   - Patient satisfaction based on Dental Survey Questionnaire
     - Average score of patient satisfaction is 94.6%.

Patient Satisfaction in MOH Facilities, 2011

Issue

Patient Satisfaction is now deemed an important outcome measure for health services. It is an attitude - a person’s general orientation towards a total experience of health care. Satisfaction comprises both cognitive and emotional facets and relates to previous experiences, expectations and social networks. Therefore, service providers need to meaningfully ascertain the experiences and perceptions of patients and the community by conducting research to identify the ways and terms in which those patients perceive and evaluate the service.

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RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT 02/2012
Key considerations for policy makers and healthcare providers

- SERVQUAL measures Service Quality Gaps which have better diagnostic capabilities. Therefore, appropriate measures can be taken to reduce service quality gap in a particular dimension.
- The other two measurement tools are based on patient perception only.
- Healthcare provider must continuously improve the services by considering the requirement and opinion of patients.
- Measurement tools must be reviewed from time to time to ensure their sensitivity and reliability.

Data from the Family Health Development Division indicated that 92.0% health clinics (701 out of 762) throughout Malaysia achieved Klinik Kawanku status that is 80% and above (Figure 1).

The proportion of patient satisfaction based on single question showed 95.1%, multiple questions 92.2% and overall SERVQUAL 49.8%. There is marked improvement in the proportion of service quality in 2011 (Figure 2).

Caring had the lowest score as compared to other SERVQUAL KKM dimensions. The highest score was Assurance (63.2%), followed by Teamwork (62.9%) and Empathy (62.8%). However, it is interesting to note that there is improvement in all dimensions in 2011 (Figure 3).

Data obtained from Oral Health Division showed dental clinics in Negeri Sembilan scored the highest proportion of patient satisfaction (99.2%), followed by Sarawak (99.1%) and Melaka (98.7%) (Figure 4).