

Influence of the Quality Level of Dental Care on Patient Satisfaction in Dental Care in La Merced Parish of Ambato Canton

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Abstract

Quality in healthcare services has become important nowadays, therefore, various factors that influence quality and therefore patient satisfaction are analyzed, by assessing these elements, it is possible to identify, consider and plan strategies that improve the dental service, among the factors are interpersonal skills, socio-economic situation of the patient, level of instruction, empathy of the dentist, among others. The objective of this article is to identify the factors that influence the quality of the dental service and the relationship with patient satisfaction, which allows the design of specific strategies for the improvement of dental care. An investigation was carried out at the level of the dental offices of the La Merced parish of the Ambato canton of the province of Tungurahua, through a qualitative-quantitative investigation, of an applied and descriptive type. Surveys were used both to dental staff and to patients, with the information collected, the factors that influence the quality of care were recognized, and the benefits of meeting the patient's expectations. The results show that, from the point of view of the patient, the satisfaction of the dental service is favorable, but it should be reinforced, which is related to the quality of service that the dentists have promoted, always for the benefit of the patient, this allows in turn, ethical labor competitiveness, maintaining an ideal doctor-patient relationship, this allows to establish a pact of familiarity and pleasure with the. empathic and professional service received.

Keywords: Satisfaction, Quality, Empathy, Dental Services

1. Introduction

The quality of care is a prominent factor that has been gaining importance in health services and the dental service is not alien to this term, so it must be faced with the security provided to the patient to establish an environment of calm and professionalism with the corresponding regulations that seek the care and protection of the patient in the dental environment contributing in turn to the reduction of complications, patient fear, and physical harm, likewise patient safety is a moral obligation under the law. (1)

Methods for assessing patient satisfaction allow for the consideration and implementation of strategies to correct and improve the quality of dental care and thus implement strategies and methods to improve quality. The patient is not only satisfied in the relationship with the treating staff, but also evaluates everything received from the health institution. Currently and especially in developed countries, to evaluate a health establishment an elementary

parameter to measure is quality, what will be measured directly by the patient, the experience in care perceived by the patient translates into the level of satisfaction captured, in addition, it is necessary to measure the quality within the framework of meeting patient expectations through continuous improvements. (2)

The implementation of instruments that allow evaluating and considering the opinion of patients regarding the dental service, must be taken into account since it would improve the quality of service to patients and in turn manages to sow confidence in the oral health service provided. (3)

Although health care has been of concern to most countries in the world, quality improvement in dentistry has been zero or scarce. The factors that most influence patient satisfaction are: economic status, level of education, age, marital status and gender. It has been discovered that lowering prices arises from an approach of reducing certain elements for the dental service, having an impact on quality which will decrease. In the socioeconomic aspect, patient satisfaction is related to the work they do. If

the patient works full-time or those who for nothing can abandon their work, satisfaction is low, on the other hand if they do it part-time or do not work, the perceived satisfaction turns out to be higher. (4)

Empathy is putting yourself at the feet of the patient, analyzing their experiences and emotions that predominate over their ailment, symptoms and it is also necessary to know how to manifest understanding towards the patient in an appropriate way. Dentists with high empathy are competent in the ideal performance of: medical history, physical examination, etc. influencing with quality care when performing ideal protocols and strategies. (5)

Working patients have a low perception of satisfaction unlike those who do not work or have a basic educational level, in addition there is greater satisfaction when patients were granted appointments in order of arrival showing dissimilarity with those who received care in a previous appointment. (6)

The search for a positive patient-dentist relationship is based especially on communication skills, ideal factor for increasing patient satisfaction in the dental office, the skill of knowing how to communicate must be formed from undergraduate dentistry where skills for dentistry are modeled, It is necessary to consider the ability of communication since it will influence the satisfaction of both the patient to understand the indications of the treating and the operator which will contribute to the tranquility of the patient, thus allowing to control the anxiety of the patient; another important factor in the satisfaction of the patients are the facilities of the dental clinic considering, cleanliness, comfort, entertainment, background melody, remodeling, etc.(7)

The attitude of the operator and auxiliary is fundamental for patient satisfaction, a key factor is the clear explanation by the dentist using a fluid and understandable language as well as a body language that inspires confidence, a positive attitude helps to understand the condition that the patient has, and the reason for the treatment process. (8)

The dentist should be educated about improving communication and psychology, to develop empathy (9). According to the American Dental Association, oral health professionals establish a trust link with their patients when an assertive communication is established and the dentist dedicates minutes of his time to clarify in detail the possible treatments that respond to the pathologies corresponding to each patient, they must be educated with patience and empathy. Communication has evolved and currently you can find studies and effective methods of communication and in dentistry is maintained in constant communication with colleagues, assistants, dental technicians and especially with patients with whom a close relationship must be maintained to establish an environment of tranquility and trust, contributing significantly to patient satisfaction. (10)

Improve the service with the participation of the health work team through the participation of

training conferences on improving quality for users, is essential to reduce the abandonment of the health consultation, it is also recommended to reduce the waiting time for care, that is, to grant simplicity and speed to waiting patients, In this way, we work on limiting abandonment by preventing the loss of resources. (11)

In a position of state of health alert, the updating of the entire health system is mandatory, which will be evaluated through the Ministry of Public Health that is linked to the Agency for Quality Assurance of Health Services (ACESS), which mention in its regulations that the personnel responsible for the dental office must comply with occupational health measures and the application of measures With the aim of preventing diseases to the servers and users of the health service (12), in the same way the professional must improve in knowledge and practice on these measures, taking into consideration that any patient can be a carrier of any type of infectious-contagious disease, it is essential to follow the updates of epidemiological surveillance for at least one year in order to improve or maintain the appropriate biosecurity protocols and apply them before the expiry of the respective health control permit by the national health authority. (13) This is indicated by the organic law of health "The operating permit will be valid for one calendar year." (14)

To assess the quality of the health service, the measurement of patient satisfaction is fundamental, and for this it is necessary to consider three essential factors of satisfaction which are the effect discerned by the patient of the benefit received, the patient's perspective, the satisfaction expressed as the patient's opinion after the care received, the dissatisfaction produced by not fulfilling the expectation that the patient had prior to the admission of the service received and the complacency which expresses an improvement in terms of the patient's perspective. (15)

2. Methodology

The present scientific article was defined according to its methodology as a **quali-quantitative** research, through the application of the qualitative approach, the information about the results of studies was reviewed, identifying what factors influence the level of quality of dental care on the level of patient satisfaction after the dental service in the offices of the parish La Merced de Ambato. Quantitative because the tabulation of information that yielded the surveys that were applied was carried out, in addition to contributions of numerical values based on the interpretation of the data proposed in the articles and books previously investigated.

According to the scope was **descriptive**: because it has characterized the factors that allowed to assess the quality of dental care in the offices of the parish La Merced of the city of Ambato where surveys and their corresponding analysis of data were applied in relation to the proposed topic.

According to the Objective, it was **applied** as it is a bibliographic review that seeks to solve a problem for which there is no systematized information collected on the influence of the quality of dental care on the satisfaction of the dental patient in the parish of La Merced of the city of Ambato, seeking to improve the quality of the dental service, increasing the level of patient satisfaction after the consultation, as well as **empirical**: by the review and documentary analysis, from which information was collected from scientific articles, books, doctoral theses, this analysis of documents and the research was exhaustive which allowed to obtain a knowledge of the literature on the subject, in addition to which the most outstanding information was extracted using databases that involved the topic to be investigated.⁶

The **survey** was used to collect information that was analyzed in a faster and more effective way, it was applied to public and private dental offices in the parish of La Merced in the city of Ambato, province of Tungurahua.

Population and Sample

The population of dental professionals, corresponds to 20 dental offices

public and private of the parish La Merced of the city of Ambato.

The population of patients involved in the research corresponds to 140 taking

Keep in mind that each office sees an average of 6 to 8 patients daily. These

patients were registered in a database where the phone number.

Sample:

The sample of dental professionals was obtained through inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Dentists of private dental offices of the parish La Merced of the city of Ambato.
- Dentists of private dental offices who are providing permanent dental care.
- Dentists of Public Dental Offices or Clinics of the parish La Merced of the city of Ambato.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Dentists from private dental offices who are providing occasional dental care.
- Dentists of Dental Offices belonging to public or private institutions who refused to participate in the research.

With the above criteria, a sample of 18 dental offices is established, whose dental professionals were part of this research to obtain data

that allow the preparation of this scientific article

The sample of patients corresponds to the 18 clinics, which participated in the research and who were selected according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria:

- Patients who agreed to participate in the research.
- Adult patients aged 20 to 60 years.

- Patients with internet access
- Patients with access to WhatsApp.

Exclusion criteria

- Patients who did not agree to participate in the research.
- Patients under the age of 20 years.
- Patients over 60 years of age.
- Patients with special abilities.
- Patients without internet access
- Patients without access to WhatsApp.

According to the above criteria, the sample of patients corresponds to 56, to whom the respective survey was applied.

3. Results

The results achieved when conducting this research was the response to the objective set, that is, with the comparison of data thrown in the survey and the information published on the subject, it was possible to identify what factors influence dental care to be of high quality.

The relationship that entails a high level of quality of dental care on the level of patient satisfaction corresponding to the dental offices of the parish of La Merced in the city of Ambato was recognized.

4. Analysis of the Survey of Dental Professionals

Have you planned strategies to improve the quality of dental care

72.2% of the professionals surveyed have planned strategies to improve the quality of dental service. While 27.8% of the professionals interviewed report not having planned these strategies, being a relevant factor that should be taken into account at present, in order to apply strategies that seek to improve the quality of care.

Which of the following options do you consider to be factors that influence patient satisfaction in the dental service

It is evident that the answers of the professionals differ, the majority of professionals represented by 33.3% indicate that all the mentioned options are important factors which is favorable for the population that receives their service since they will be able to establish a balance applying strategies to improve the quality and perception of the patient, however 27.8% of health professionals indicate that low prices is one of the factors that influences in patient satisfaction when in reality, lowering prices would be equivalent to the reduction of resources and materials being proportional in this way to the quality of work. Meanwhile the options that are represented by 5.6%, 11.1% and 11.1% represent correct options, but in isolation whose influence on patient satisfaction intervenes, but partially, Finally 11.1% mention that no factor influences patient satisfaction.

How often do you adapt facilities to provide good dental care

50% of respondents mention that the adequacy of the facilities is done occasionally, it is considered a fundamental factor since, with the constant implementation of equipment and instruments, they allow to improve the quality of care. 27.8% indicate that they frequently make adjustments in the dental office, go hand in hand with updates and accumulation of learning and knowledge by dentists to provide a better quality service and ensuring a lasting and effective work. 11.1% mention that adjustments are made very frequently. Likewise, 11.1% mention that the facilities are never adapted, which considerably affect care and in turn patient satisfaction, by not contributing with new technologies meaning poor care in the dental service and an insignificant perception of satisfaction by the patient.

Do you practice empathy with your patients

33.3% of respondents report that, if they practice the value of empathy with their patients, on the contrary, 33.3% allude that they almost always practice this value, also 33.3% indicate that sometimes they practice this value, important for the quality of dental service. Empathy is a fundamental value that favors from a correct collection of data or anamnesis starting with a correct professional relationship – patient that guarantees the progress of dental treatment in a reliable way.

5. Analysis of The Survey to Patients of the Dental Service

In the dental office you attend, do you clarify any doubts you have regarding any disease or treatment

It is evident that 55.4% indicate that in the place where they were attended, they almost always clarify the existing doubts, being a fundamental aspect. While 26.8% mention that sometimes the operator clarifies the patient's doubts, which exhibits a risk of not establishing the trust that is needed to establish a doctor-patient relationship. Also, 1.7% indicate that doubts regarding the dental service or treatment received are never clarified. On the contrary, and as shown in the graph, 16.1% of respondents mention that doubts are always clarified, being directly proportional to the quality of care and the perception of patient satisfaction in the dental consultation when answering the doubts raised by the user of the health service.

How does the organization rate the practice team

Among other fundamental aspects that are important to consider when measuring patient satisfaction is the organization of the office, in which 41.1% of the patients surveyed mention that the

offices they have attended have good organization, which includes in the user's perception aspects such as waiting time, the reception, the supply of supplies for care, communication of the health service team, biosecurity of the place, while 35.7% of respondents consider that the organization is regular, allowing to deduce a certain shortcoming in some aspects that should be worked to improve satisfaction during the patient's stay in the dental office, in a similar way but more aggravating is the criterion of 5.3% when indicating that the organization of the service is bad. There is also a 17.9% who mention that the organization of the office is excellent meeting expectations, this aspect is important to evaluate since the patient's opinion is collected regarding the order and planning of the dental staff.

Do you think the cost is right in relation to the quality of service

83.3% of respondents think the cost is correct in relation to the quality of service, while 16.7% consider that the cost is not correct in relation to the quality of the service they receive. From the analysis of the data it can be inferred that the vast majority of dental offices in La Merced parish work adequately, with necessary materials and competent knowledge to offer quality work and the minority demonstrates that it has shortcomings, which were manifested in the survey of patients who receive the dental service, Identifying these shortcomings will allow us to plan improvements, correcting errors identified through in-depth studies.

How satisfied are you with the care you receive at the dental office or clinic

Finally, by inquiring about how satisfied the patient feels in the dental office, the degree of quality and its effect on the satisfaction provided in oral health care can be determined. In which 30.4% indicate being satisfied with the care received, the same happens with 17.9% of the population when indicating being extremely satisfied. On the contrary, 25% of the population indicates being moderately satisfied, highlighting the existence of certain shortcomings in terms of some factor of the quality of the service that allow concluding with this indicator on the part of the patient, 19.6% manifest to be little satisfied, as well as manifested

7.1% of the population who are not satisfied with the service received. Therefore, it should be evaluated what factors can be inferred in this decision, analyze and plan strategies in order to improve the quality of the service and favoring in turn a positive perception regarding patient satisfaction after the care received.

6. Discussion

The quality of the dental service has a close relationship with patient satisfaction, when receiving this service, these two aspects must be assessed through observational research since it collects important information, which enables decision-making for the respective improvements. Fuentes S.

mentions that patient satisfaction is proportional to the good quality dental service and the progress of the health institution allowing labor competitiveness. (16) It is evident that dental practices that have applied cross-sectional studies to measure patient satisfaction have a strong link with the ideal results in the survey. Lara J. mentions that this method allows strategies to correct shortcomings and improve the service in the dental office. (17)

Age and gender, socioeconomic status, practice technology, and marital status are factors that influence different degrees respectively. Lara JJ; Hermoza RV and Sacramento CA. In their study they mention that with regard to the cost factor, it can be deduced that the quality factor can be diminished due to limited logistical capacity, or low quality of service that implies cost reduction. (18). Due to the increase in competitiveness in health services, especially the dental service, it is necessary to apply a study that identifies its weaknesses in quality of service and as Mendoza D mentions, it should focus on a continuous improvement and monitoring plan whose management must be carried out minimizing failures, and correcting them (19)

Biosafety in dentistry is an issue that should be updated annually through official epidemiological surveillance information from health control entities, to safeguard the health of the patient, considering that the dental professional is likely to come into contact with viral, bacterial, etc. infections due to his area of work in the oral cavity and his proximity to body fluids, blood etc. Manrique M, "biosecurity is a measure to maintain stable levels of quality of life avoiding the proliferation of infectious diseases." (20), likewise García A, Loverlyne Y, recommend assuming that any patient who is going to be treated is infected with some type of infectious-contagious disease, especially the Covid-19 Virus (21)

The explanation of the pathologies and treatments are factors that provide quality to the dental service, likewise the dentist will demonstrate their communication skills, contributing to the loyalty of the beneficiaries product of the perceived satisfaction. This is what Rosa CR mentions. The preservation of interpersonal relationships between dentist-patient, complements the quality of service, positively influencing patient satisfaction, an important aspect that supports the status of the office, is an action that must be performed without exception. (22)

It is very important to adapt the facilities of the dental service, occasionally since it will not affect the economy of the professional when making constant investments and when they are considered necessary such as the health emergency situation that is currently experienced in which Sánchez O. suggests an improvement in terms of biosafety protocols since, according to his study, patient surveys mention that there is insufficient time in the disinfection process (23).

The treatment provided by the dentist and empathy are related, by ensuring that empathy It is a value that is practiced in most of the consultations offered in the parish of La Merced, while patients perceive it as the treatment received, to establish an understanding of the dentist towards the patient's need, allowing in turn to establish trust and dissemination of good service by those who receive the service, as mentioned by Cáceres M. Knowing and understanding the patient's ailments allows the perception of the service as a treatment towards the patient the most correct, in this way a correct interpersonal relationship is established, which allows to reveal the skills of explanation and clarification of doubts regarding the pathologies and treatments of the patient (24)

As for the waiting time, it is related to the perception of quality by the patient, the average of the respondents indicates a time within the limits in which the patient gets tired of waiting, being a risk of desertion or abandonment of the dental office as mentioned, Silvia C, B. in her study, And the other half consider that the waiting time that exceeds this limit is positive, this has a close relationship with the perception regarding the organization of the office.

According to the time of care to the patient Kenny C, S indicates that the perception of quality

With regard to the care provided by the professional to his patients has to do with the time of the professional's workday, who should consider offering an ideal time for filling out the medical history, possible treatments, quotes, likewise, at the opportune moment of starting with the treatment, the patient must be given the necessary confidence and empathy in order to provide satisfaction during the care in the consultation. dental. Respondents infer that the cost is adequate in relation to the quality of the service they have received, allowing a perception of satisfaction on the part of the client, taking into account that they can implement systems of

more accessible payment and especially in this time of pandemic by Covid-19, deducting that the time of treatment does not have enough money to cover

This physical expense and as Díaz R mentions, the patient could present inconveniences in the payment and be a factor that predisposes to the rejection of the treatment, in the same way mentions the bonus, in terms of the application of projects aimed at loyalty and offering discounts on treatments, as a positive aspect and satisfaction for the user.

The quality of dental care services has a significant impact on patient satisfaction in the La Merced Parish of Ambato Canton. According to a study by Lozada López, Villacreses Medina, and Villacis Lascano (25), the knowledge of students at Uniandes, Ecuador, on the manifestations of oral cancer highlights the importance of proper dental care. In addition, success factors in the joint custody process can also play a crucial role in ensuring the well-being of patients (26). Furthermore, Solano

Moreno et al. (27) suggest that the application of compensatory fuzzy logic can aid in legal analysis of abandonment of causes, which can ultimately improve the quality of dental care services. Thus, the aforementioned studies emphasize the significance of maintaining high-quality dental care services to enhance patient satisfaction in La Merced Parish.

7. Conclusions

It is concluded that the factors that have been studied and mentioned in the study are indispensable in any cross-sectional study that is to be carried out to improve the service in dental health. Currently, a fundamental aspect to take into consideration to determine the quality of the dental service is biosecurity since due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the patient is afraid of contagion.

If the dentist provides adequate time to his patient, with empathy and addresses his interpersonal relationship skills effectively, he obtains favorable results in satisfaction since this way, the professional can explain the pathologies and possible treatments effectively, which gives a significant contribution and confidence to the patient. When assessing the cost-quality aspect, it is important to establish a list of the services and products used for the treatments that are of ideal quality, so that it represents a positive investment, both for the dentist and the patient, which is directly corresponding to the cost of the service provided and satisfaction after the service provided.

Emphasis should be placed on strengthening knowledge about the factors that influence quality and satisfaction in health care related to; the schedules, waiting time and comfort in your stay in the office or dental clinic from the

Admission, the path of care until the end of the consultation. In addition, it is essential to train the professional on an ideal doctor-patient relationship, since

This allows to establish a pact of familiarity and pleasure with the professional service received.

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Regenerate response