

Original article

Physical Therapy Patient Satisfaction at General Hospitals in TripoliMohammed Wali^{*}, Rashad Grera, Moad Aljundi, Amina Bashir

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Corresponding email. mo.wali@outlook.com**Abstract**

Patient satisfaction has become a critical metric in healthcare delivery, as it reflects the quality of care and alignment with patient needs. In physiotherapy, patient opinions are integral to evidence-based practice along with clinical expertise and research evidence. This study aimed to assess the satisfaction levels of patients receiving physiotherapy services in general hospitals across Tripoli. A cross-sectional study was conducted involving 70 participants (30 males, 40 females) aged 19–65 years, recruited from physiotherapy units in four hospitals in Tripoli. A physical therapy satisfaction questionnaire was used to evaluate patient satisfaction across various dimensions of service quality. Statistical analysis was performed to identify significant differences in the satisfaction levels. Of the participants, 42.9% were male, and 57.1% were female. The findings revealed statistically significant differences in most satisfaction-related items, with p-values less than 0.05, except for 18 items for which differences were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Overall, most patients expressed high satisfaction with physiotherapy services, including the quality of care provided by therapists, the efficiency of services, and the effectiveness of treatment sessions. This study demonstrates that patients receiving physiotherapy services in public hospitals in Tripoli are generally satisfied with the care they receive. These results underscore the competence of public physiotherapy services and their ability to meet patient expectations regarding various aspects of care delivery. This study provides evidence to support the effectiveness and quality of public healthcare facilities in Tripoli.

Keywords: Patient Satisfaction, Physiotherapy, General Hospitals, Public Healthcare.

Introduction

As health care provision has become more patient-centered, patient satisfaction has emerged as a critical outcome of care. Patients' views about their health care are intrinsically important to clinicians and are one of the three key elements of evidence-based physiotherapy practice. Evaluation of patient satisfaction with physiotherapy care provides specific and objective feedback to clinicians about the services they provide. Physiotherapists can use this evidence to optimize the quality and outcomes of patient care (1).

Patient satisfaction is an essential indicator of the quality of physiotherapy service (2). The need for continuous improvement of quality and safety in the provision of patient care has become self-evident. The resultant paradigm shift from acceptance of the status quo to a drive for constant improvement in clinical practice has required the engagement of multiple monitoring strategies. Ascertaining patients and their relatives' satisfaction with the care received is one of the most reliable strategies to improve clinical practice (3).

Patient satisfaction is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that reflects the patient's experiences while seeking healthcare. It is directly associated with treatment outcomes and compliance with the treatment (4). The quality of care provided to recipients of health services is measured by the satisfaction of the patient. Patient satisfaction is the extent to which patients feel that their needs and expectations have been met on behalf of their expenses they incurred to get quality health services (5). It can be challenging to evaluate the success of physiotherapy for people with long-term or progressive conditions when their outcome measures often deteriorate over time. The purpose of this service evaluation was to explore whether a physiotherapy outpatient service was achieving its aim of helping patients to self-manage their long-term disease (6).

Methods

A cross-sectional survey design was employed using the Patient Satisfaction Instrument, which consisted of 20 items. The development of the instrument was guided by the five hypothesized domains of patient satisfaction proposed by Nelson. In addition, demographic data, including the physical activity levels of university students, were collected. The study sample comprised patients attending public health facilities for treatment in the physiotherapy department. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire evaluating their satisfaction with the services and treatments provided in these public facilities.

Results

The figure illustrates the gender distribution within the study sample. Females comprise 57.1% of the participants, while males account for 42.9%, providing an overview of the group's composition.

The data presented in Figure 2 showed that the largest proportion of patients (41%) were self-referred. This suggests a growing awareness among patients about the benefits of physical therapy, possibly due to increased health literacy or prior positive experiences with rehabilitation. Insurance companies served as the second most common referral source (33%), underscoring their significant role in guiding patients toward therapeutic care. Referrals from friends accounted for 21% of cases, demonstrating the impact of

personal recommendations in healthcare decisions. Word-of-mouth endorsements likely contribute to trust-building, particularly for patients who may be uncertain about starting therapy. Finally, a small minority (4%) cited "other" referral sources, which could include physician recommendations, employer-sponsored programs, or community health initiatives not captured in the main categories.

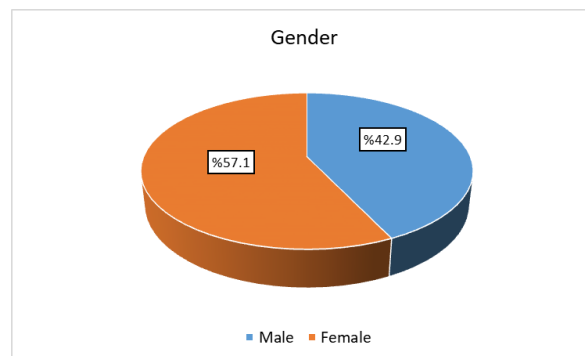


Figure 1. The percentage of gender females, 57.1% and males, 42.9%

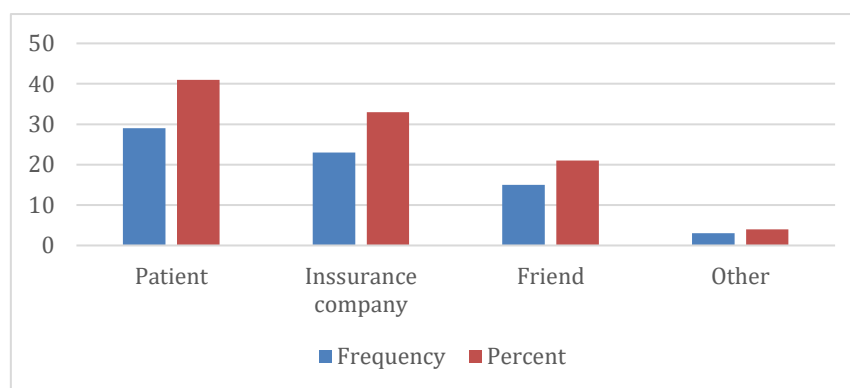


Figure 2. The frequency and the percentage of the question

In Table 1, a significant majority of respondents (65.7%) reported that this was their first time undergoing physical therapy, while only 34.3% had prior experience. This suggests that a considerable portion of patients may require additional guidance and reassurance, as they are new to the therapeutic process. Clinics should consider implementing thorough orientation programs or introductory sessions to help first-time patients feel more comfortable and informed about their treatment. Similarly, an overwhelming 82.9% of respondents indicated that this was their first visit to the particular facility, compared to just 17.1% who had been there before.

Table 1. Time and place in physical therapy

Time and place in physical therapy		Frequency.	%
Is this your first time with physical therapy?	No	24	34.3
	Yes	46	65.7
Is this your first time in this place?	No	12	17.1
	Yes	58	82.9

We note in Table (2) that there are statistically significant differences between all paragraphs where the significance level for them was less than (0.05) and that most of the sample members tended to agree strongly, except for the paragraph in paragraphs (7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26) and paragraphs (10, 11, 13) were their tendency to agree, and all sample members agreed not to know paragraphs (16, 24, 25) at a rate of (100%). (18) There are no statistically significant differences, as its significance level is greater than (0.05), although the largest percentage of it was in favor of strongly agreeing with a percentage of (24.3%), but this difference is not significant.

Table 2. Patient satisfaction in general outpatient clinics

Items		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	I do not know		Sig.
Was your privacy respected during physical therapy? Was the physical therapist's manner polite?	Frequency	2	1	4	23	40	0	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	2.9	1.4	5.7	32.9	57.1	0		
Were all the other staff polite? Were the specified times for the physical therapy session appropriate?	Frequency	0	1	2	20	46	1	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	0	1.4	2.9	28.6	65.7	1.4		
Were you satisfied with the treatment provided by the physical therapist? Was my first visit scheduled quickly?	Frequency	2	3	5	19	39	2	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	2.9	4.3	7.1	27.1	55.7	2.9		
It was easy to schedule sessions after my first visit My session started right away when I arrived.	Frequency	4	5	2	23	33	3	Agree	Sig.
	%	5.7	7.1	2.9	32.9	47.1	4.3		
Was the clinic location suitable for me? My bills were accurate	Frequency	1	2	3	33	30	1	Agree	Sig.
	%	1.4	2.9	4.3	47.1	42.9	1.4		
Were you satisfied with the service provided to me by the physical therapist assistant? Did I find it difficult to park the car?	Frequency	5	8	7	22	26	2	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	7.1	11.4	10	31.4	37.1	2.9		
Understanding the physical therapist my condition or problem? Were the instructions given to me by my physical therapist helpful?	Frequency	3	6	2	29	27	3	Agree	Sig.
	%	4.3	8.6	2.9	41.4	38.6	4.3		
Were you satisfied with the quality of physical therapy? I recommend this place to family or friends	Frequency	4	12	10	14	24	6	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	5.7	17.1	14.3	20	34.3	8.6		
Will I come back to this place if I need physical therapy in the future? Was the cost of physical therapy treatment reasonable?	Frequency	4	9	4	18	32	3	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	5.7	12.9	5.7	25.7	45.7	4.3		
If I had to. Would I pay for these physical therapy services myself?	Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	70	I do not know	Sig.
	%	0	0	0	0	0	100		
Was your privacy respected during physical therapy? Was the physical therapist's manner polite?	Frequency	1	1	8	22	34	4	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	1.4	1.4	11.4	31.4	48.6	5.7		
Were all the other staff polite? Were the specified times for the physical therapy session appropriate?	Frequency	13	10	5	10	17	15	Strongly agree	Not sig.
	%	18.6	14.3	7.1	14.3	24.3	21.4		
Were you satisfied with the treatment provided by the physical therapist? Was my first visit scheduled quickly?	Frequency	0	1	2	18	39	10	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	0	1.4	2.9	25.7	55.7	14.3		

It was easy to schedule sessions after my first visit My session started right away when I arrived.	Frequency	0	1	0	22	42	5	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	0	1.4	0	31.4	60	7.1		
Was the clinic location suitable for me? My bills were accurate	Frequency	0	3	4	25	33	5	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	0	4.3	5.7	35.7	47.1	7.1		
Were you satisfied with the service provided to me by the physical therapist assistant? Did I find it difficult to park the car?	Frequency	3	3	5	16	41	2	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	4.3	4.3	7.1	22.9	58.6	2.9		
Understanding the physical therapist my condition or problem? Were the instructions given to me by my physical therapist helpful?	Frequency	3	3	4	18	39	3	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	4.3	4.3	5.7	25.7	55.7	4.3		
Were you satisfied with the quality of physical therapy? I recommend this place to family or friends	Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	70	I do not know	Sig.
	%	0	0	0	0	0	100		
Will I come back to this place if I need physical therapy in the future? Was the cost of physical therapy treatment reasonable?	Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	70	I do not know	Sig.
	%	0	0	0	0	0	100		
If I had to. Would I pay for these physical therapy services myself?	Frequency	1	2	4	17	42	4	Strongly agree	Sig.
	%	1.4	2.9	5.7	24.3	60	5.7		

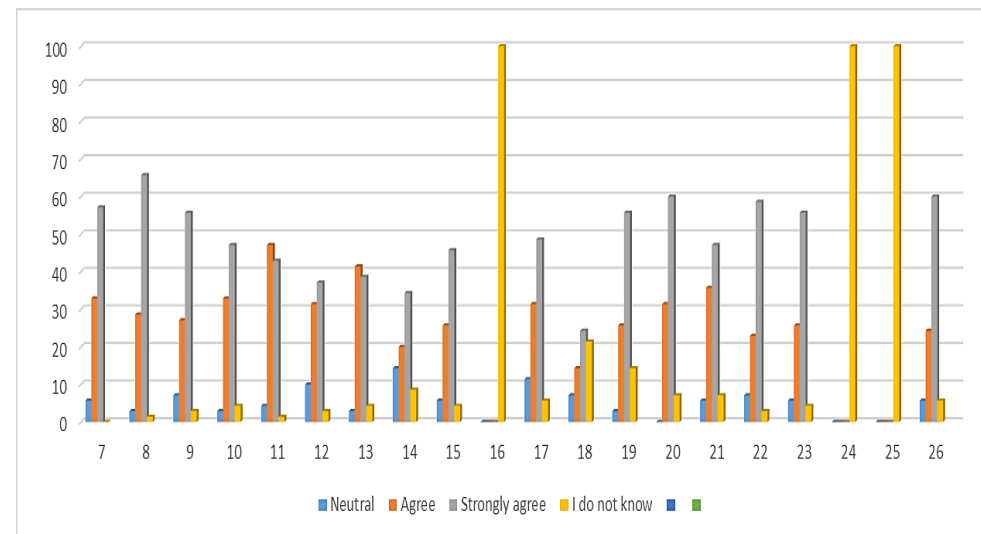


Figure 3. Patient satisfaction in general clinics

Table 3 shows that the most common injury is to the foot, accounting for 21.4% of cases (n=15), followed by neck pain (17.1%, n=12) and lower back pain (17.1%, n=12). Elbow injuries were reported in 10% of cases (n=7), while the remaining regions were affected at lower rates: pelvis (4.3%, n=3), shoulder (14.3%, n=10), hand (5.7%, n=4), knee (7.1%, n=5), and others (2.9%, n=2).

Table 3: Refer to the area where you received treatment.

The area of treatment	Frequency.	%
Neck	12	17.1
Pelvis	3	4.3
LPB	12	17.1
Foot	15	21.4
Shoulder	10	14.3
Hand	4	5.7
Elbow	7	10.0
Knee	5	7.1
Others	2	2.9

Discussion

Our study included 70 participants aged 19–65 years, with a higher proportion of females (57.1%) than males (42.9%). The mean age was 41.36 years (SD = 12.484). These findings align with a 2019 study by Algodairi (4), which also reported a higher female participation rate (76.8% females vs. 23.2% males). However, unlike our study, Algodairi's participants were aged 31–50 years (SD = 12.7).

The results of this study reveal distinct patterns in injury distribution among participants. Spine-related injuries (affecting the neck and lower back) were the most prevalent, reported by 24 participants (34.3%), followed by upper limb injuries (shoulder, elbow, and hands) in 21 participants (30%). Meanwhile, 23 participants (32.9%) experienced lower extremity injuries (pelvis, knee, and foot), and only 2 participants (2.9%) reported injuries in other regions. This contrasts sharply with findings by Adamu Ahmad Rufa et al. (2019), whose study identified lower extremity injuries as the most common (92 participants), with other regions being least affected.

Our study also revealed that treating physicians were the primary source of information regarding treatment locations, accounting for 41.1% of responses. Insurance company recommendations followed at 32.9%, while friend recommendations accounted for 21.4%. Other sources made up the remaining 4.3%. Additionally, we analyzed whether this was the patients' first experience with physical therapy. The results showed that 65.7% responded "yes," while 34.3% said "no." In a separate question, participants were asked if this was their first visit to the public health facility in question. Here, 82.9% answered "yes," whereas 17.1% responded "no."

Conclusion

The study indicates that most physical therapy patients are generally satisfied with the public healthcare services provided in Tripoli hospitals. Furthermore, the findings serve as evidence that the physical therapy services in public facilities are satisfactory across various aspects. These include the quality of care provided by therapists, the effectiveness of treatment sessions, and the availability of adequate patient privacy. Overall, patient satisfaction exceeded 60%, demonstrating a favourable perception of the services offered.

Acknowledgments

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors state that there are no conflicts of interest.

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