# Trends in health care customer satisfaction

1. More options and transparency are being provided by legislation to health consumers

There is a rise in consumerism in health care that is aimed at improving customer satisfaction. The payment of insurance premiums and direct payments to healthcare providers have been made transparent by the legislature for the healthcare consumer (Ferrand et al., 2016). This has helped patients in choosing better-valued health plans. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality is required to study the cost information that is preferred by patients and provide them with timely and straightforward health care cost information. This trend has come up as legislations’ way of making the healthcare customers more satisfied.

1. Provision of a more consumer-driven care by hospitals

The introduction of online tools and several mobile apps have helped patients to have more knowledge about their healthcare costs. The increase in the number of hospitals has led to a more competitive industry, and the management is reducing healthcare costs and at the same time making the services more consumer-driven to attract more customers (Ferrand et al., 2016).

1. Electronic storage of medical information

The advancement in technology has resulted in a trend that is aimed at improving the satisfaction of healthcare consumers. Hospitals are installing technology that is allowing electronic storage of patients' medical information. There is the privacy of information that makes the healthcare consumer confident that third parties will not access his or her information.

These are some of the trends in the healthcare sector whose purpose is to improve the patient satisfaction. Healthcare consumer satisfaction can be in the form of clean environment, high-quality services, the privacy of medical information, and a good patient-to-doctor relationship.

## How to obtain customer satisfaction data

Customer satisfaction data can be obtained through conducting a face-to-face interview, online survey, and email survey about the products and services offered, delivery, the staff, and the organization (Pizam et al., 2016). After services are offered, customers can be requested to fill in a form that explains how satisfied they are with the goods or services. They can also be interviewed by staff members and be asked to give their opinions on the quality of the services and propose on what they would want to be improved. If face-to-face interviews are not possible, surveys can be conducted through emails or online through the organization's website. Before sending the questionnaires, it is important to notify the customers about the activity and request that they take part in the survey.

The completion of the surveys and face-to-face administration of questionnaires is the first step to obtaining customer satisfaction data (Pizam et al., 2016). After the feedback is received, the organization has to go through the answers and compile them into different sections. This ensures that each customer’s feedback is used in the analysis of the data. For example, all answers to how the customers are satisfied with the services should be considered. This will make sure that there is correct information on the number of patients that are very satisfied, satisfied, less satisfied, and not satisfied. After compiling the results of each question, then it will be easier to do an analysis of the data and come up with a conclusion about the level of customer satisfaction.

Some factors are important in obtaining the correct data about customer satisfaction. The first one is asking the right questions based on what the provider knows about each client’s experiences (Blair, Czaja, & Blair, 2013). This ensures that the information received from the customer is correct. The second factor is interpreting the customers’ feedback accurately. This can be done using open-ended feedback and structured statistical feedback (Gale et al., 2013).

## Advantages of surveys in collecting patient satisfaction information

They provide up-to-date feedback (Fowler, 2013). Surveys allow gathering current feedback from the patients on the different aspects of the healthcare services. Healthcare providers can remain updated about the changing demands of the patients through conducting email surveys or online surveys. This provides instant feedback. It is important to acquire information how patients are reacting to the hospital environment, the quality of services, and the patient-doctor relationship.

Secondly, patient satisfaction surveys show that the healthcare providers care about their clients (Fowler, 2013). Patients feel good when they know that their caregivers are concerned about their welfare. It creates a perception that they are valued and that their doctors are committed to having a long-term relationship with them.

Thirdly, patient satisfaction surveys provide benchmark results. Healthcare providers can administer same survey questionnaires often to their patients. This allows comparison of data over time and determines if any changes need to be made. Healthcare providers to note the areas that their levels of performance have decreased can use the benchmark results. It creates a better ground of improving the issues of concern to the customers so that they can retain them and attract more.

## Disadvantages

Feedback received from the patients could be biased. Surveys are structured in a way that they are simple to complete. However, not every person likes to complete them. Some patients may send back incomplete surveys or those that have false information. If the surveys are sent too often, they may irritate the patients, and this can cause a low response rate.

Secondly, because of the high-tech environment that is full of email solicitations and unwanted junk email, patients may take an online survey or phone survey as tracks. There are increased insecurities of giving out private information, and this makes patients hesitant to fill in the surveys.

The key components of the survey are overall rating measures and service-specific questions. Overall rating measures entail questions that require patients to rate various elements of the services such as telephone calling, how well the procedures and instructions are explained, and how well was his or her condition explained among others. Service-specific questions provide detailed information on the customers’ experience. For example, how long does it take before they are served when they arrive at the hospital? This survey will help the marketing team in identifying the areas that the patients want to improve. The team can use the data from the surveys to identify the priorities of the aging population that can be used to market the services to them.

## References

Blair, J., Czaja, R. F., & Blair, E. A. (2013). *Designing surveys: A guide to decisions and procedures*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Ferrand, Y. B., Siemens, J., Weathers, D., Fredendall, L. D., Choi, Y., Pirrallo, R. G., & Bitner, M. (2016). Patient Satisfaction With Healthcare Services: A Critical Review. *Quality Management Journal*, *23* (4), 1-22.

Fowler Jr, F. J. (2013). *Survey research methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage publications.

Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S., & Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. *BMC medical research methodology*, *13*(117), 1-8.

Pizam, A., Pizam, A., Shapoval, V., Shapoval, V., Ellis, T., & Ellis, T. (2016). Customer satisfaction and its measurement in hospitality enterprises: a revisit and update. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *28*(1), 2-35.

Appendix

**PATIENT SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. How well did the personnel clarify the procedures and directives for your understanding?

| Very well |
| --- |
| Ok |
| Poorly |
| n/a |

1. How well did the physician give details about your sickness, associated measures and medications for your understanding?

|

| Very well |
| --- |
| Ok |
| Poorly |
| n/a |

 |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

1. In the hospital visit, was the environment in your room clean and comfortable?

|  |

| Yes |
| --- |
| Sometimes |
| No |
| n/a |

 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

1. Did the health personnel respond to your requests for help in a reasonable amount of time while in the hospital?

| Yes |
| --- |
| Somehow |
| No |
| n/a |
|  |

1. How long does it take before you are served when you arrive at the hospital?
2. Describe your personal relationship with the doctors.
3. Describe the medical care you have been receiving in this facility.