Quality of Psychiatric Service Care from Patients Perspective and Factors Affecting the Service Quality at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka

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In Sri Lanka, mental health has been given a low priority despite one out of ten in the population estimated to suffer from a mental illness. Majority of the psychiatric patients in the country are treated and followed up at psychiatric clinics at government hospitals. The objective of the study was to assess the quality of the services provided at the psychiatric clinics from patient's perspective and the factors affecting quality of the service. The study was a descriptive cross sectional, conducted at the Psychiatric clinics in the National Hospital of Sri Lanka (NHSL). 292 clinic attendees in remission, followed up at the clinics for ≥ 1 year, decided by treating team as capable to give the informed consent were recruited using systematic sampling method. Perception and expectations on five quality dimensions of SERVQUAL model (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) were assessed using pre-tested, interviewer administered questionnaire with 30 items, on 5 points Likert's scale. Strongly agree to disagree 5 – 1 points. The maximum marks an individual can obtain is 150 and the minimum was 30 for each expectation and perception. Minimum of 120 marks or above should be obtained for favourable level of expectation and perception tangibility dimension scored highest mean (1.4816, SD = 0.0014), assurance scored the least mean (1.1054, SD = 0.0003), for expectations. Responsiveness scored the highest mean (2.9816, SD = 0.1636) while tangibility scored least mean (2.1379, SD = 0.0004) for perceptions. Overall perception mean (2.548, SD = 0.66218) regarding quality of service was higher than expectations mean (1.218, SD = 1.357) and hence, a positive quality gap (1.2) was received. Perception of tangibility was associated with level of education ($p = 0.004$), and ethnicity ($p = 0.010$); empathy with unemployment ($p = 0.03$). Perception was high with the level of education and Ethnicity; Patients expect more tangible facilities than what they perceived as low. They perceived service as patient centered or responsive. They were not concerned about the capability or competency of the service provider.

Keywords: Perception, expectation, service quality gap