

## Evaluation of patients' satisfaction: A case study of the dental clinic of Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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### Abstract

**Objective:** Understanding patients' satisfaction after treatments is an important aspect of human medicine. Considering the paucity of information on dental patients' satisfaction after treatment or care in Nigeria thus, this study was to evaluate patients' satisfaction following treatments at the dental clinic of Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

**Methods:** A total of 150 patients were recruited for the study by convenience sampling while a self-administered questionnaire was used to gather patient's bio data, access to care, quality of care and general satisfaction.

**Result:** Majority of the patients 64.7% reported satisfactory, 31.3% reported very satisfactory whereas, only 4.0% of the patients reported unsatisfactory.

**Conclusion:** This study confirms that majority of participants had considerable level of satisfaction with the dental care received. However, more ultra-modern dental facilities should be provided to enhance safe and efficient dental care.

**Keywords:** Satisfaction, dissatisfaction, patients, dental, care

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## Évaluation de la satisfaction des patients: Étude de cas de la clinique dentaire du complexe hospitalier universitaire de Obafemi Awolowo, Ile-Ife, Nigéria

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### Resume

**Objectif:** Comprendre la satisfaction des patients après les traitements est un aspect important de la médecine humaine. Compte tenu de la pénurie d'informations sur la satisfaction des patients après un traitement ou des soins au Nigéria, cette étude devait donc évaluer la satisfaction des patients après des traitements à la clinique dentaire de l'hôpital universitaire d'Obafemi Awolowo, Ile-Ife, dans l'État d'Osun, au Nigéria.

**Méthodes:** Un total de 150 patients ont été recrutés pour l'étude par échantillonnage de commodité, tandis qu'un questionnaire auto-administré a été utilisé pour recueillir les données biologiques, l'accès aux soins, la qualité des soins et la satisfaction générale des patients.

**Résultat:** La majorité des patients 64,7% ont déclaré satisfaisant, 31,3% très satisfaisant, alors que seulement 4,0% des patients ont déclaré insatisfaisant.

**Conclusion:** cette étude confirme que la majorité des participants étaient très satisfaits des soins dentaires reçus. Cependant, des installations dentaires plus modernes devraient être mises en place pour améliorer la sécurité et l'efficacité des soins dentaires.

**Mots-clés:** satisfaction, insatisfaction, patients, soins dentaires, soins

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## INTRODUCTION

Patient satisfaction is a cognitive evaluation of the service that is emotionally affected, and it is therefore an individual subjective perception about medical care or attention. Hence, if a patient is to be adequately served, then she/he must have a voice in the process of care (1). Several studies have reported multidimensional concept of patients' satisfaction following care however, the researches underscore the notion that since satisfaction is multidimensional, patients can be satisfied with some areas of care, but not with others (2-5). Patients require regular oral health examinations and dental treatments to lessen discomfort, improve dental appearance, and enhance occlusal functions. Accessibility and convenience are often the most relevant aspects for patients when selecting a dental health facility (1).

Various studies (6-7) have also reported different dimensions of patients' satisfaction. Poor communication between dental health practitioner and patient, low confidence in the dental care giver, and complaints about the quality and fees have been associated with poor compliance with dental recommendations, low utilization and/or the termination of treatment. Newsome et al stated that as with health care in general, patient satisfaction has also been shown to influence compliance and in turn, treatment quality. Possible factors that may influence patient's decision include ease of access and transportation to the clinic, clinical facilities, medical equipment, and expenses, billing methods, recommendations from family and friends, and media advertisements (4).

If satisfaction influences compliance, and better compliance means healthier patients in the long term, then perhaps the most effective way to improve compliance for younger patients is to increase their general satisfaction with the dental practice.

Hence, the primary aim of this study was to assess the level of satisfaction of patients attending dental clinic of the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital's complex (OAUTHC) for treatment.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Patients and Study Design

This study relied on information provided by patients attending the dental clinic of the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital's complex (OAUTHC). Patients' consent was sought; parents gave consent for the

minors before recruitment into the study. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) patients (aged 8 - 85 years) with no other co-morbidities apart from oral health challenges that attended the clinic as their first visit between the study periods that satisfied the inclusion criteria were selected. The study lasted for 6 months.

### Data Collection

A self-administered structured questionnaire was used for collecting data in this study. Several statements were used to measure the research construct. Basically, the questionnaire evaluated the views and feelings of patients with respect to the level of satisfaction with dental care services at the OAUTHC dental clinic. There were 26 questions drafted for the purpose of the study. The questions focus on the following areas: patient's bio data, access to care, quality of care and general satisfaction. The questionnaire was divided into 4 sections with each section containing different questions relevant to the study. The first section comprised of different questions about patients bio data e.g. gender, age, marital status etc. The focus of the second section was on access to care. The third section entails detailed questions on the quality of care before, during and after treatment, and the last section was on general satisfaction. Questionnaires were completed after treatment at the various specialists' sections at the dental clinic; oral surgery, restorative, preventive/periodontology and child dental health clinics.

After the questionnaire had been administered and collected from the respondents, responses were checked for consistency and detection of error in order to make amendment where necessary. Out of a total of 200 questionnaires administered; 186 were retrieved and only 150 were deemed valid for analysis. Data retrieved was entered and analyzed using SPSS, version 20. Frequency distribution tables were generated for age, gender, marital status, educational background, and occupation, level of patients' satisfaction while mean and standard deviation were also determined respectively. Differences with p-value of 0.05 or less were considered statistically significance. Responses gathered for each of the category of patients' satisfaction were grouped into very satisfactory, satisfactory and non-satisfactory accordingly.

## RESULTS

Majority (68.0%) of the respondents fall within 11-30 yrs age group while other age group

<10 years, 31-50 years and >71 years accounts for 0.7%, 15.3% and 3.3% respectively. The mean age of the respondents was 31 years while the standard deviation of the age of the respondents is 15.81. The ratio of male to female is 11:9 while that of single to married was 2:1. Educational background followed this pattern: 78% of the respondents had tertiary education, 17.3% had secondary education, 2.7% had primary education (2.7%) and 2.0% had no education (2.0%). The occupation of the respondents were as follows; Students (61.3%), Professionals (24%), Artisans (10.7%) and Retirees (4%) respectively.

The level of patients' satisfaction based on patients' opinions was presented in Table 2. Majority of the respondents (89%) agreed that the dental clinic was well located or accessible with male and female accounting for 44% and 56% respectively. Similarly, most of the respondents (75%) agreed that the waiting area is comfortable with male and female accounting for 42% and 58% of the respondents respectively. Greater percentage (71%) of the patients disagreed that they had delay seeing the dentists with male being 46% and female 54%. Most of the respondents (93%) agreed that enough personnel are available to give dental care with 45% male and 55% female. Furthermore, majority of the respondents (92%) agreed that there are enough dental operatives with male and female accounting for 43% and 57% respectively. Also, more respondents (73%) agreed that they were well attended to by the receptionist; male and female being 41% and 59% respectively. About 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the patients (63%) agreed that they understood the cause of their complaints prior to treatment commencement with male and female accounting for 46% and 54% respectively. Almost all of the respondents (95%) agreed that good infection control mechanism were observed in handling instruments with male and female accounting for 44% and 56% respectively. Also, most of the respondents (91%) agreed that they were carried along during the treatment with male and female being 45% and 55% respectively. Majority of the respondents (94%) agreed that they were given postoperative instructions to follow. Likewise, 95% agreed that they understood the instructions with male and female accounting for 45% and 55% respectively. Majority of the respondents (76%) had appointment for review after the treatment with male and female being 48% and 52% respectively. Similarly, 86% of the respondents agreed that they complied with the instructions;

male and female accounting for 43% and 57% respectively. Most of the respondents (66%) agreed that there was improvement before their review appointment with male and female being 45% and 55% respectively. Likewise, 63% of the respondents agreed that the improvements were up to their expectations with male and female accounting for 44% and 56% respectively.

The perception, views and level of satisfaction of patients regarding dental care received is presented in table 3. Respondents' impressions about dental services at initial visit were recorded as follows; 35% had quality attention of dentists or dental nurses without undue stress, with 58% of them being female and 42% being male. The respondents who reported not to be stressed were 17%, 42% of which were females and males 58%. Majority of the respondents (38%) reported that all signs and symptoms will resolve completely after the dental visit with male and female accounting for 35% and 65% respectively. Only 7% of the respondents reported that they will improve but not completely after the dental visit with 80% being male and 20% being female. Few (3%) of the respondents had other reservations about their level of improvement with male and female accounting for 50% each.

For respondents' opinion regarding the cost of dental treatment in the clinic; few of the patients (9%) reported that the cost of dental care is expensive with majority (64%) being female and 36% being male. The cost of dental care was reported to be cheap by 10% of the respondents with 57% being male and 43% being female. Most of the respondents (81%) reported that the cost of dental care is affordable with male accounting for 43% and female 57%.

For the respondents perception of treatment outcome; more than half of the respondents (52%) reported good outcome with 43% and 57% being male and female respectively. Only 5% of the respondents stated that the outcome was fair with equal response from both male and female (50%). Majority of the respondents (93%) were pleased with the dental care received with 46% being male and 54% being female while 7% of the respondents were not pleased with the dental care received with majority being female (70%) and male being 30%.

For respondents impression about subsequent visit for dental care; majority of the respondents (93%) are encouraged to visit the dental clinic for future dental care with male and female accounting for 45% and 55% respectively.

Few of the respondents (7%) are discouraged for further dental visit with male being 40% and female 60%. Most of the respondents (95%) based on their experience will encourage others to visit the clinic for dental care with male and female being 45% and 55% respectively. Only 5% of the respondents will not encourage others to visit the clinic for dental care with male and female accounting for 43% and 57% respectively. For respondents subjective opinion about their overall satisfaction; majority of the respondents (65%) stated that the dental care was satisfactory, most of which were female (56%) and male 44%. Lesser percentage 31% of the patients reported that the dental care received was very satisfactory with male and female accounting for 47% and 53% respectively. Only few (4%) of the respondents reported that the dental care received was not satisfactory with male being 33% and female 67%.

## DISCUSSION

Patients require regular oral health examinations and dental treatments to ease discomfort, improve dental appearance and functions (1). If a patient is to be adequately served, then he or she must have a voice in the process of care.

Satisfaction from dental treatment is considered to be an important issue that influences the attitude and cooperation of patients. It is associated with the quality of treatment and other variables which could be said to be physical, emotional, social and financial in nature. Several studies (1, 6, 8, 9) have reported that women are more likely to seek dental care than men. This is consistent with this study in which the higher percentage of respondents was females. This is probably because females are more aesthetically concerned and are more health conscious compared to the males.

Previous studies (10, 11) have reported that women have greater exposure to dental services and these moderate their expectations and satisfactions hence women are more satisfied than men. The finding of this study is in consonance with the previous reports as female genders were more satisfied than males.

Previous study reported that patients who are single exhibited low overall satisfaction (12). This study showed that larger percentage of respondents (67.3%) were singles. This is probably influenced by the location of the study since majority of the population are students.

Contrary to a research (13) which posited that the less educated rather than educated attach

a higher priority to care, the majority of the respondents (78.0%) in this research were educated and had tertiary education, this is in alignment with some previous studies (1,14). The findings of this research is however probably because the OAUTHC dental clinic in which this study was carried out is within the university setting and hence, gets her patronage from members of the university community which largely are students.

Several scholars (6-8) have reported patients' satisfaction with care to be influenced by the dentists' communicative behavior. Also, desirable interactions have been linked to patients' satisfaction (15) The findings of this research is similar to the previous studies (6,7,16) in that the respondents were satisfied with the dentists communicative behavior and interactions, as majority of the patients stated that they were well carried along in the course of the treatments and their treatment outcome was similar to the information given to them.

Previous study (18) have listed some of the factors which affect the satisfaction level of patients utilizing outpatient services to include unusually long waiting time at registration counter, irritable behavior of registration clerk, lack of proper space for waiting, too long waiting time before consultation, undesirable behavior of doctors and communication gap between doctors and patients. In this study, majority of the respondents stated that the waiting area was comfortable, that they did not wait for too long before consultation and that they were well attended to by the receptionist. This is similar to most reports in the literature (7, 18).

Infection control practice is essential especially in handling instruments during treatments to reduce and/or prevent spread of infections hence instruments handling is one of the factors that can contribute to patients' satisfaction. Almost all the respondents in this study claimed that the instruments used for their treatment were well handled. This is similar to the report of previous studies in which respondents felt comfortable with the cautions taken in handling instruments to prevent them from contracting any form of infection (20, 21).

Similar to previous studies (1, 22) which reported high satisfaction levels with dental care, the majority of the patients in this study reported that they are satisfied with the treatments received at the dental hospital, OAUTHC.

## CONCLUSION

This study highlighted the degree of

satisfaction obtained from dental services rendered at this facility based on multidimensional factors. Further studies are needed to determine the patients' satisfaction following dental treatments so as to continually improve the quality of care delivered. Care providers should also be encouraged to improve the services given to patients.

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**Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Information**

		Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)	<10	1	0.7
	11-30	102	68.0
	31-50	23	15.3
	>71	5	3.3
Gender	Male	67	44.7
	Female	83	55.3
Marital Status	Single	101	67.3
	Married	49	32.7
Educational background	No education	3	2.0
	Primary education	4	2.7
	Secondary education		
	Tertiary education	26	17.3
	Students		
	Professionals	117	78.0
	Retirees		
Occupation	Artisans	92	61.3
		36	24.0
		6	4.0
		16	10.7
Total		150	100.0

**Table 2: Level of patients' satisfaction based on patient's subjective opinion**

Variables	YES		A	NO		D	P
	M	F	%	M	F	%	value
Do you think dental clinic is well located (to give accessibility)	59(44%)	75(56%)	134(89%)	8(50%)	8(50%)	16(11%)	1.51
Is the waiting area comfortable?	47(42%)	66(58%)	113(75%)	20(54%)	17(46%)	37(25%)	1.53
Did you wait a long time to see the dentist?	18(41%)	26(59%)	44(29%)	49(46%)	57(54%)	106(71%)	1.51
Do you think there are enough personnel here to give dental care?	63(45%)	77(55%)	140(93%)	3(30%)	7(70%)	10(7%)	1.51
Are there enough dental operative here?	59(43%)	79(57%)	138(92%)	8(67%)	4(33%)	12(8%)	1.54
Were you well attended to by the receptionist?	45(41%)	65(59%)	110(73%)	9(50%)	9(50%)	40(27%)	1.55
Do you have any understanding about what is causing your complaints before commencement of the treatment based on the explanations?	45(47%)	50(53%)	95(63%)	22(40%)	33(60%)	55(37%)	1.52
Do you know how long the treatment will take?	24(49%)	25(51%)	49(33%)	43(43%)	58(57%)	101(67%)	1.52
Do you think you were delayed in the course of the treatment?	18(41%)	26(59%)	44(29%)	49(46%)	57(54%)	106(71%)	1.51
Do you think the instruments used for your treatment were well handled?	63(44%)	80(56%)	143(95%)	4(57%)	3(43%)	7(5%)	1.52
Were you carried along during the treatment?	62(45%)	75(55%)	137(91%)	5(38%)	8(62%)	13(9%)	1.51
Did you experience anything strange aside what you were told before the treatment?	6(40%)	9(60%)	15(10%)	74(55%)	61(45%)	135(90%)	1.53
Are there instructions you were told to follow after the treatment?	63(45%)	78(55%)	141(94%)	4(44%)	5(56%)	9(6%)	1.51
Did you understand the instruction?	64(45%)	79(55%)	143(95%)	3(43%)	4(57%)	7(5%)	1.53
Were you told to come back for check-up?	55(48%)	59(52%)	114(76%)	12(33%)	24(67%)	36(24%)	1.54
Were you told the expectation of the	41(49%)	43(51%)	84(56%)	26(39%)	40(61%)	66(44%)	1.52

**Table 3: Patient's perception and level of satisfaction of dental care received**

Variables	N	Female	%	P value
	Male			
<b>What was your impression about services in this clinic before you visit?</b>				
				1.62
I feel I will be attended to without undue stress	22(42%)	31(58%)	53(35%)	
I feel I will be stressed before receiving attention	15(58%)	11(42%)	26(17%)	
I feel my complaints will be perfectly treated after the visit	20(35%)	37(65%)	57(38%)	
I feel my complaints will be treated to certain extent	8(80%)	2(20%)	10(7%)	
Others	2(50%)	2(50%)	4(3%)	
<b>What is your opinion about the cost of treatment in this clinic</b>				
				1.52
Expensive	5(36%)	9(64%)	14(9%)	
Affordable	53(43%)	69(57%)	122(81%)	
Cheap	8(57%)	6(43%)	14(10%)	