

*Original Article*

**SATISFACTION OF PATIENTS REGARDING HEALTH CARE SERVICES AT SELECTED UPAZILA HEALTH COMPLEXES OF BANGLADESH**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Hospitals are important vehicles for the delivery of health care services to the patients and feedback from patients is essential to measure the quality of care provided by health personnel. The study aims to determine the level of patient satisfaction in selected upazila health complexes of Bangladesh.

**Materials and methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in 59 randomly selected UHCs across four Bangladeshi divisions from December 2023 to May 2024. Data were collected from 882 patients using a pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire. Patient satisfaction was assessed using the SERVQUAL framework to evaluate healthcare quality in the Bangladeshi context.

**Results:** Among the respondents (patients), 66.2% were female and 82% were married. About 53.3% respondents were housewife and 33% had no formal education. Regarding easy to getting services, 77.6% were satisfied on waiting time in reception area, 79.8% in registration area and 78% in visit to doctor. Regarding interpersonal manner, 17.3% were dissatisfied on courtesy towards the doctor, 5.9% towards the nurses and 16.8% towards the staff. About 89.1% patients were satisfied on doctors' willingness, 87.2% on time taken to answer question, 79.1% on physical examination but only 54% satisfied on privacy arrangements. On the other hand, more than 86% were satisfied on explanation of illness, explanation of treatment, instruction regarding medication and follow-up. About 52.9% dissatisfied on facilities to safe drinking water supply, 57.5% about toilet facilities and 29.5% on overall cleanliness in the hospital. Among the respondents, 89.4% patients had average level of satisfaction in emergency department, 86.7% had average level in in-patient department and 89.3% had average level of satisfaction in out-patient department of the selected UHCs. Regarding overall satisfaction of UHCs, around 88.3% respondents had average level of satisfaction.

**Conclusion:** This study revealed an average level of patient satisfaction with the services provided by the selected UHCs in Bangladesh. Improving cleanliness, safe drinking water, toilet facilities, investigation services, special public relation related training and privacy during examinations can significantly boost patient satisfaction in the Upazila Health Complexes.

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**INTRODUCTION**

In emerging nations, the health sector plays a pivotal role in ensuring sustained socioeconomic progress, as it directly impacts the well-being of the population.

One of the key indicators of the effectiveness of healthcare delivery is patient satisfaction, which reflects the views and needs of patients regarding the services they receive. A major government report of

Bangladesh: Unlocking the Potential (2005) recognized public health services have been rated the lowest among all types of service providers in term of user's satisfaction. Evaluating patient satisfaction is critical, as it provides valuable insights into the quality of healthcare, particularly in the absence of established quality indicators. However, patient satisfaction as an important dimension for ensuring quality healthcare is getting priority in the developed countries [1,2]. In the context of Bangladesh, where healthcare delivery encompasses public, private, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), understanding patient satisfaction is essential for improving the health system's responsiveness and efficiency. Another study on patient satisfaction with quality of hospital services in Bangladesh showed that there is a loss of faith in public hospitals. The study also identified some factors such as doctors' treatment, the behavior of nurses and their services patient are significantly influencing patients' satisfaction [3].

Bangladesh's healthcare system is structured across various levels, ranging from national super-specialized institutions to community-level clinics. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) is the main body responsible for organizing and implementing healthcare services at the national and local levels. Despite the government's efforts to provide free healthcare through a vast network of community clinics, challenges such as limited access to modern healthcare services, inadequate service quality, and high out-of-pocket expenses persist. These issues have contributed to widespread dissatisfaction, with many patients opting for treatment abroad, particularly in neighboring countries, leading to significant losses in foreign exchange.

While progress has been made in improving healthcare in Bangladesh, much remains to be done. The country's healthcare system continues to face issues related to equitable service distribution, efficiency, and affordability. The lack of trust in local healthcare services and dissatisfaction with the quality of care have become significant barriers to improving overall health outcomes. There are some qualitative studies yet to be conducted to explore the issues. Provider's behavior, especially respect and politeness are the most powerful predictor for client satisfaction with the public health care services [4].

## **RESULT**

Socio-demographic information of the patients: The significant findings of the study revealed that about 66.2% of the service receivers were female and age

Despite this, there is a notable gap in the research on patient satisfaction in Bangladesh, particularly studies that utilize extensive field-level data.

This study aims to fill this gap by assessing patient satisfaction across various UHCs in Bangladesh. By measuring the satisfaction levels of patients, this research seeks to provide valuable insights that can inform the development of public health strategies tailored to patients' expectations and needs. Understanding these determinants of satisfaction will help improve healthcare services and contribute to the creation of a more responsive and efficient healthcare system in Bangladesh.

## **METHODS**

The descriptive type of cross-sectional study was carried out in randomly selected 59 UHCs from 10 districts of 4 divisions from 15 December 2023 to 14 May 2024 to determine the level of patients' satisfaction in selected upazila health complexes of Bangladesh. A total of 882 service receivers (patients) from were taken as sample. SERVQUAL Framework refined [3] in the context of Bangladesh was used to find out the level of patient satisfaction of above mentioned UHCs. Pretest of the questionnaire was done in Keraniganj and Shibpur UHC considering 10% of calculated sample. Then the questionnaire was finalized after necessary correction and modification based on findings of pre-test. Relevant data were collected by using pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire by face-to-face interview. Before starting data collection, institutional permission from concerned authority of UHC was taken. A written informed consent was taken from each of the respondents, in maintaining full autonomy of the participants. After collection of data these were checked, verified, coded and edited. The data entry was started immediately after completion of data collection. Data processing and analysis were done using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 22 and Microsoft excel. Data were analyzed according to objectives of the study. Descriptive statistics was used for all variables. Values were expressed as frequency and percentage, arithmetic mean, bivariate and multivariate analysis.

group was (19-40) years, 82% were married, 90.9% were Muslim, no formal education was 33%. About 62% were old patients and rest 38% were new patients.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of patients (service receivers) (n=882)**

Socio-demographic information	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Age	0-5 Years	1	0.1
	6-18 Years	45	5.1
	19-40 Years	471	53.4
	Above 40 Years	365	41.4
Sex	Male	297	33.7
	Female	584	66.2
	Others	1	0.1
Marital status	Married	723	82.0
	Unmarried	126	14.3
	Divorced	6	0.7
	Widowed/ widower	27	3.1
Religion	Islam	802	90.9
	Hindu	78	8.8
	Buddhist	2	0.2
Educational Level	No formal education	291	33.0
	Primary education	208	23.6
	Secondary education	175	19.8
	SSC	82	9.3
	HSC	79	9.0
	Diploma	5	0.6
	Graduation	26	2.9
	Masters and above	16	1.8
Occupational status	Job	61	6.9
	Business	97	11.0
	Farmer	55	6.2
	Housewife	470	53.3
	Retired	17	1.9
	Student	71	8.0
	Day laborer	60	6.8
	Jobless	39	4.4
	Others	12	1.4
Type of patient	New	335	38.0
	Returning	547	62.0

**Table 2: Dimension 1: Ease of getting service (n-882)**

Ease of getting service	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfaction on waiting time in the reception area	Very dissatisfied	7	0.8
	Dissatisfied	155	17.6
	Satisfied	687	77.9
	Very satisfied	32	3.6
	Extremely satisfied	1	0.1
Satisfaction on waiting time in the registration area	Very dissatisfied	4	0.5
	Dissatisfied	154	17.5
	Satisfied	704	79.8
	Very satisfied	17	1.9
	Extremely satisfied	3	0.3
Satisfaction on waiting time to visit the doctor	Very dissatisfied	3	.3
	Dissatisfied	167	18.9
	Satisfied	693	78.6
	Very satisfied	18	2.0
	Extremely satisfied	1	0.1

Among 882 respondents (patients), 77.9% patients were satisfied on waiting in reception area, 79.8%

were satisfied on waiting in registration area and 78.6% were satisfied on waiting for doctor's visit.

**Table 3: Dimension 2: Interpersonal manner, communication, time given (n-822)**

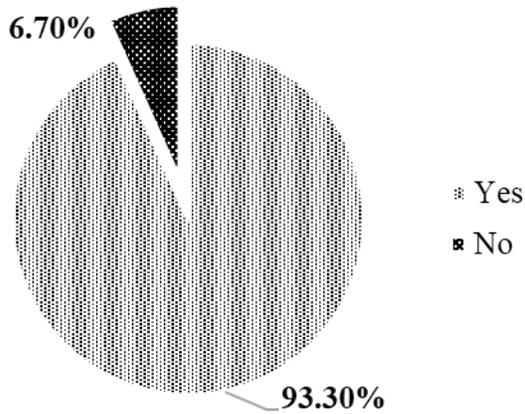
Interpersonal manner, communication, time given	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Extremely satisfied
Courtesy towards the doctor	2 (0.2%)	153 (17.3%)	713 (80.8%)	5 (0.3%)	2 (0.2%)
Courtesy towards the nurse	3 (0.3%)	52 (5.9%)	747 (84.7%)	79 (9.0%)	1 (0.1%)
Courtesy towards ward boy/staff	2 (0.2%)	148 (16.8%)	707 (80.2%)	12 (1.4%)	1 (0.1%)
Doctors' willingness	1 (0.1%)	41 (4.6%)	786 (89.1%)	52 (5.9%)	2 (0.2%)
Time taken to answer by doctors	1 (0.1%)	49 (5.6%)	769 (87.2%)	61 (6.9%)	2 (0.2%)
Thoroughness of examination	1 (0.1%)	79 (9.0%)	698 (79.1%)	23 (2.8%)	25 (0.9%)
Privacy arrangements	2 (0.2%)	242 (27.4%)	476 (54.0%)	5 (0.6%)	1 (0.1%)
Explanation of illness	2 (0.2%)	83 (9.4%)	780 (88.4%)	17 (1.9%)	0 (0%)
Explanation of treatment	3 (0.3%)	105 (11.9%)	759 (86.1%)	14 (1.6%)	1 (0.1%)
Instruction regarding medication & follow-up	3 (0.3%)	55 (6.2%)	769 (87.2%)	16 (1.8%)	0 (0%)
Investigation done	3 (0.3%)	63 (7.1%)	329 (37.3%)	4 (0.5%)	0 (0%)
Medicine given	23 (2.6%)	184 (20.9%)	642 (72.8%)	4 (0.5%)	0 (0%)
Parking management	1 (0.1%)	24 (2.7%)	544 (61.7%)	1 (0.1%)	4 (0.5%)
Outpatient schedule	1 (0.1%)	97 (11.8%)	626 (71.0%)	4 (0.5%)	0 (0%)
Sitting arrangements	8 (0.9%)	177 (21.5%)	561 (65.4%)	7 (0.4%)	0 (0%)
Water facility	31 (3.5%)	467 (52.9%)	335 (38.0%)	4 (0.5%)	1 (0.1%)
Toilet condition	38 (4.3%)	507 (57.5%)	291 (33.0%)	4 (0.5%)	0 (0%)
Overall cleanliness	35 (4.0%)	260 (29.5%)	579 (65.6%)	8 (0.9%)	0 (0%)
Disease solving	25 (2.8%)	16 (0.8%)	519 (58.8%)	2 (0.2%)	1 (0.1%)

Among 882 respondents, most were satisfied with staff courtesy (doctor 80.8%, nurse 84.7%, ward staff 80.2%), doctors' willingness (89.1%), consultation time (87.2%), and explanation of illness and treatment (88.4% and 86.1%). However, dissatisfaction was noted in privacy (27.4%), investigation services (only 37.3% satisfied), water supply (52.9%), toilet facilities (57.5%), and

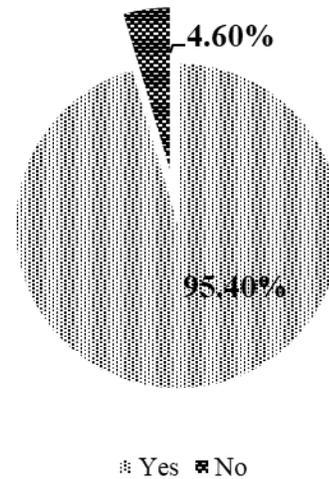
cleanliness (29.5%), while 71% were satisfied with outpatient scheduling and 67.1% with waiting arrangements.

**Recommend others to visit the hospital**

Among 882 respondents, 93.30 % of the respondents would recommend others people to visit the hospital



**Figure 1: Recommend others to visit the hospital people**



**Figure 2: Interest in receiving services again in hospital**

**Interest in receiving services again in hospital**

Among 882 respondents, 95.40 % of the respondents showed their interest to receive the services from the hospital again.

**Table 4: Dimension-3 Overall Satisfaction (n-833)**

Overall Satisfaction	Categories	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Satisfaction on hospital whole services	Very dissatisfied	7	0.8
	Dissatisfied	56	6.3
	Satisfied	784	88.9
	Very satisfied	32	3.6
	Extremely satisfied	3	0.3
Satisfaction on availability & responsiveness of help desk	Very dissatisfied	3	0.3
	Dissatisfied	152	17.2
	Satisfied	599	67.9
	Very satisfied	8	0.9
	Extremely satisfied	1	0.1
Satisfaction regarding find different department booth	Very dissatisfied	4	0.5
	Dissatisfied	52	5.9
	Satisfied	784	88.9
	Very satisfied	11	0.3
	Extremely satisfied	1	0.1

Among the respondents, 88.9% patients were satisfied on overall services provided by the hospital, 67.9% were satisfied on availability &

responsiveness of help desk and 88.9% satisfied on regarding find different department booth.

**Table 5: Department wise Satisfaction and overall satisfaction**

Department wise Satisfaction	Poor	Average	Good	Total
<b>Emergency Department (n=189)</b>	5 (2.6%)	169 (89.4%)	15 (7.9%)	189 (100%)
<b>In-Patient Department (n=330)</b>	18 (5.5%)	286 (86.7%)	26 (7.9%)	330 (100%)
<b>Out-Patient Department (n=363)</b>	23 (6.3%)	324 (89.3%)	16 (4.4%)	363 (100%)
<b>Overall Satisfaction of Emergency, In-patient and Out-patient Department</b>				
<b>Overall Satisfaction (n=882)</b>	46 (5.2%)	779 (88.3%)	57 (6.5%)	882 (100%)

Among patients from the emergency department, 89.4% reported average satisfaction, 7.9% good, and 2.6% poor. In the in-patient department, 86.7% were average, 7.9% good, and 5.5% poor. Out-patient respondents showed 89.3% average, 4.4% good, and 6.3% poor satisfaction. Overall, 88.3% of all respondents reported average satisfaction, 6.5% good, and 5.2% poor. These findings indicate that while most patients across all departments are moderately satisfied with services, there remains a small proportion experiencing poor satisfaction.

## DISCUSSION

The study aims to determine the level of patient satisfaction in selected upazila health complexes of Bangladesh with a sample size of 882 respondents. The findings provide valuable insights into the quality of services offered by the hospital and highlight areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement.

In this study, most patients expressed satisfaction with the waiting times in different areas of the hospital, including the reception (77.9%), registration (79.8%), and waiting for the doctor (78.6%). Previous studies from Aldana et al. (2001) [4] and Rahman et al. (2002) [5] also identified long waiting time and insufficient consultation time as factors contributing to patient dissatisfaction in Bangladesh. However, the presence of minor dissatisfaction in these areas could indicate a need for continued improvements in streamlining processes to further reduce waiting times, thus improving patient experience.

Patient satisfaction was high with the courtesy shown by healthcare professionals. In this study, 80.8% of respondents were satisfied with the doctor's courtesy, 84.7% with the nurse's courtesy, and 80.2% with the

ward hospital staff's courtesy. Furthermore, 89.1% of patients were satisfied with the doctor's willingness to engage with them, and 87.2% were satisfied with the doctor's response time and thoroughness during examinations [6]. These positive responses reflect the hospital's commitment to professional, compassionate care. However, a notable area for concern was the 27.4% of patients dissatisfied with the privacy arrangements. This suggests a potential gap in ensuring confidentiality and privacy, which is crucial for maintaining patient trust and comfort.

Clear communication is a cornerstone of effective healthcare delivery, and patients expressed high satisfaction in this domain. Most respondents were satisfied with the explanation of their illness (88.4%), treatment (86.1%), and medication instructions (87.2%). Another study showed Almost 90% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their period of inpatient care [6]. These findings underscore the hospital's efforts to ensure that patients are well-informed and engaged in their care decisions. However, 37.3% of patients were dissatisfied with the investigations conducted at the hospital, which may point to perceived delays, a lack of thoroughness, or concerns about the quality of diagnostic services provided. Similarly, while a majority were satisfied with the medication given (72.8%), the relatively lower satisfaction rate for investigations and some aspects of hospital amenities warrants further attention.

Hospital facilities received mixed reviews. A significant proportion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with basic amenities such as water supply (52.9%), toilet facilities (57.5%), and overall cleanliness (29.5%). These results indicate that there is room for improvement in maintaining a hygienic and comfortable environment for patients. Although the hospital received high marks for signage and

direction (87.25%), the dissatisfaction with cleanliness and basic amenities suggests a need for more focused attention on non-clinical services, which significantly contribute to patient comfort and satisfaction.

Across the various departments, patient satisfaction was generally positive, with a predominant level of average satisfaction. In the Emergency Department, 89.4% of patients reported average satisfaction, 7.9% reported good satisfaction, and only 2.6% reported poor satisfaction. Similarly, in the In-Patient and Out-Patient Departments, 86.7% and 89.3% of respondents reported average satisfaction, respectively. These findings highlight that while most patients are generally satisfied, there are areas that could benefit from improvements in service delivery and patient care. Notably, the Out-Patient Department showed a slightly higher percentage of patients reporting poor satisfaction (6.3%) compared to the Emergency and In-Patient Departments, pointing to potential gaps in outpatient care that could be explored further. Recent reviews on patients' satisfaction also highlighted that importance of providers' interpersonal communication skills outweighs their technical competence and recommended to strengthen training and evaluation on providers' interpersonal skills and empathetic skills [7,8]

Despite some areas for improvement, the hospital received positive feedback overall. A remarkable 93.3% of respondents would recommend the hospital to others, and 95.4% expressed a desire to return for future services. These high percentages indicate strong loyalty and positive perceptions of the hospital, suggesting that the institution's strengths in service delivery, such as patient-provider interactions and treatment quality, outweigh the dissatisfaction reported in certain aspects.

The present study is subject to several limitations. Respondents (patients) were selected using a convenient sampling method, which introduces the possibility of selection bias. This could affect the generalizability of the findings as the sample may not accurately represent the broader population of patients. Some respondents (managers) were unavailable for data collection, either due to being on training or being in the field during office hours. This resulted in missing data from certain individuals, potentially limiting the comprehensiveness of the study.

## CONCLUSION

Regardless above limitation, the study enables to identify the satisfaction level of patients of selected upazilla health complexes. Data were taken from fifteen patients from selected each UHC. Around two third of the respondents were female, age group (19-40) years, married, housewives and old patients. More than two third of the respondents were satisfied on waiting time in the reception, registration and visit to doctor. They also satisfied on courtesy towards doctor, nurse and hospital staff. But around half of the respondents were not satisfied on privacy arrangement in the hospital. More than one third respondents was satisfied on investigation done by hospital. Most of the respondents

were interested to receive service again in the hospital and recommended others to visit the hospital. More than eighty percent patients' satisfaction level was average in emergency, in-patient and out-patient department of the hospital. Special public relation related training should be arranged for all health personnel at regular interval and this could help them to work more professionally.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Authorities should arrange special public relation related training for all health personnel as early as possible and also refresher training at regular interval.
- Authorities should take immediate measure to improve overall cleanliness, safe drinking water supply, toilet facilities.
- Authorities should improve laboratory investigation facilities by uninterrupted supply of reagent and other logistics.
- Authorities should take appropriate measure to maintain privacy arrangement strictly during patient examination

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