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Using patient satisfaction survey data to improve and monitor the patient care

Jailan Gabr

Kuwait Cancer Control Center - Ministry of Health, Kuwait

Statement of the Problem: Long waits for patients to be called in the procedure room, delayed patient's reports results due to delayed turnaround time and uncomfortable waiting area, are few of the most commonly faced problems by patients. The purpose of this survey is: to comply with hospital accreditation standards of measuring patient satisfaction annually and taking action on results; to establish a performance measure and; to improve turn-around time (TAT) and thus to avoid delayed management of patients.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: Fine needle aspiration (FNA) had become a well-established diagnostic component in pathology. The need for FNA in a 200 bed and the only tertiary care center for cancer are even more. Having realized that, the laboratories department decided to reduce the TAT of FNA in order to shorten the time to treatment of a patient. Four improvement interventions were introduced consecutively, a new program for patient's appointment, a new second FNA clinic for FNA blind cases, implementation of co-path system (pathology information system), and providing information and instruction about FNA procedure to patients in a clear informative and understandable manner. These interventions were selected based on the annual patient satisfaction survey programmer's recommendations, as required by the National Accreditation Standards. The standardized questionnaires have been distributed annually to 300 patients on average, for three months: from April to June, 2014-2016. The analysis used a quantitative method for measuring and evaluating patient satisfaction. Based on patient surveys and comments, the clinical laboratories department was able to improve patient care. Improvements were to keep waiting to a minimum, so waiting time was minimized. All patients were called within 30 minutes of their appointment time. The waiting area was less crowded, thus alleviating stress. Co-path system helped to avoid long waits for lab results to be released. Analysis of patient satisfaction survey for years 2014, 2015 and 2016 revealed increase from 65%, to 71%, 84% in 2015 and 2016 respectively.

Conclusion & Significance: Patient satisfaction is a good source for selection of improvement projects. In addition, it is a good outcome measure of care quality, provided that it was designed in a way to ensure validity and reliability. Feedback from patients is an integral part of the hospital's quality improvement process.