ORIGINAL ARTICLE

An evaluation of patient satisfaction with pharmaceutical services at Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital

Nuriza Bengimiate[1*], Haqi Hartopo[1], Razoki[2], Astriani Natalia Br Ginting[2]

ABSTRACT

Patient satisfaction is a crucial indicator for assessing hospital service quality, in which pharmaceutical services play a vital role as a primary point of contact with patients. This study aimed to comprehensively evaluate the satisfaction level of outpatients with the pharmaceutical services at Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital. This research employed a descriptive quantitative design with a cross-sectional approach. A total of 90 respondents were selected through a purposive sampling technique based on predetermined criteria. The research instrument was an adapted questionnaire designed to measure satisfaction across five dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The collected data were analyzed descriptively using SPSS software. The findings indicated that patients were generally satisfied with the pharmaceutical services they received. The highest level of satisfaction was observed in the responsiveness dimension, with a percentage of 69.72%. The other dimensions, in descending order, were tangibles (32.21%), empathy (27.19%), assurance (19.60%), and the lowest was the reliability dimension (16.00%). Overall, the patient perception of pharmaceutical services at Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital is positive. Nevertheless, there remains room for improvement, particularly in the reliability and assurance dimensions. Continuous quality improvement through enhanced patient education and optimization of facilities is highly recommended.

Keywords: patient satisfaction, pharmaceutical services, service quality, hospital

Introduction

Hospitals, as foundational pillars of the national healthcare system, are charged with the responsibility of delivering high-quality, patient-centered, and safe medical services. In the contemporary era, the paradigm of healthcare has shifted from a physician-centric to a patient-centric model. This transition underscores the patient's experience and perception of care as primary metrics for evaluating the success of a healthcare institution.[1,2] Consequently, patient satisfaction is no longer considered a supplementary objective but rather a critical indicator of the overall quality of services, which in turn influences the hospital's reputation, patient loyalty, and adherence to treatment regimens.[3,4]

Among the various service units, the pharmacy department plays a vital role in the patient's healing process and overall satisfaction. Pharmaceutical services extend beyond the mere dispensation of medication to encompass a complex series of processes, including drug compounding, the provision of drug information,

Affiliation
[1] Undergraduate in Clinical Pharmacy, Universitas Prima Indonesia, Medan, Indonesia
[2] Department of Pharmacy, Universitas Prima Indonesia, Medan, Indonesia

[*]**Corespondence:**
razoki@unprimdn.ac.id

patient counseling, and medication therapy monitoring, all aimed at ensuring the efficacy and safety of pharmacotherapy. The interaction between pharmacists or pharmacy technicians and patients often represents the final point of contact in the hospital's service pathway. Therefore, the patient's experience within this unit can leave a lasting impression that significantly shapes their perception of the hospital's holistic service quality.[5–7]

Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital, as the principal referral hospital in its region, is committed to the continual enhancement of its service quality to meet public expectations. With a rising volume of patient visits, the challenge of maintaining high service standards across all units, including the pharmacy, has become increasingly pronounced. Potential issues that may diminish patient satisfaction include extended waiting times, insufficient information regarding medication use and potential adverse effects, and suboptimal communication from staff. A systematic evaluation is therefore warranted to objectively measure patient perceptions of the services rendered by the pharmacy department.

This study, focused on evaluating patient satisfaction with pharmaceutical services, holds significant practical and academic importance. From a practical standpoint, its findings will provide invaluable feedback for the management of Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital and the head of the Pharmacy Department. The data can inform the identification of existing deficiencies, the formulation of targeted improvement strategies, and the enhancement of human resource competencies within the pharmacy. Ultimately, these quality improvements are aimed at advancing patient safety and optimizing therapeutic outcomes.

In light of this background, the present study is designed to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of outpatient satisfaction with the pharmaceutical services at Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital. This assessment will utilize the SERVQUAL framework, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, to measure various dimensions of satisfaction.[8] This framework assesses patient perceptions across five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. It is anticipated that this research will provide a lucid overview of both the well-performing and underperforming aspects of the service, thereby establishing a foundation for a continuous quality improvement program for pharmaceutical services in the future.

Method

This research was designed as a descriptive quantitative study employing a cross-sectional approach. The primary objective was to obtain a comprehensive overview of the level of patient satisfaction with pharmaceutical services at Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital during a specific period. The collected quantitative data were analyzed to describe patient satisfaction, which was measured across five service dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.

The study was conducted at the Outpatient Pharmacy Unit of Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital. The research activities spanned a nine-month period, commencing with problem formulation and title proposal in December 2023. This was followed by the development of the research proposal from January to February 2024, and its seminar presentation in March 2024. The core phase, consisting of research implementation and field data collection, was carried out from April to August 2024. The final stage involved data processing and analysis in July, culminating in the comprehensive compilation of the research report in August 2024.

The target population for this study comprised all patients or their family members who filled prescriptions at the Outpatient Pharmacy Unit of Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital. From this target group, the accessible population was defined as all patients who presented during the study period. Based on monthly prescription data, this population was estimated to be approximately 900 individuals per month, which formed the basis for the sample size calculation.

A non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, was used to select the sample. This method was chosen to allow the researcher to intentionally select respondents who best fit the research objectives based on predetermined criteria. The minimum sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula with a 10% margin of error, which, from a population of 900, yielded a sample size of 90 respondents. The inclusion criteria for participation were: (1) being a patient or family member filling a prescription at the research site; (2) providing voluntary willingness to participate, evidenced by signing an informed consent form; (3) possessing effective communication skills; and (4) being 18 years of age or older. Conversely, individuals were excluded from the study if they declined to participate, had severe communication impairments, or returned an incomplete questionnaire.

The primary variable measured in this study was Patient Satisfaction with pharmaceutical services. This variable was operationally defined as the respondent's subjective assessment comparing the perceived performance of the service with their expectations. The variable was measured using five sub-variables or indicators: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The measurement tool was a questionnaire employing an ordinal scale derived from the Likert Scale. The resulting scores were analyzed and categorized into four levels of satisfaction: Unsatisfied, Less Satisfied, Satisfied, and Very Satisfied, based on intervals referencing the standard set.

The data collection instrument was a questionnaire adapted from a previous study conducted by Mita Windian in 2020. The questionnaire was designed in two parts. The first part collected respondent demographic data, while the second part consisted of 13 items specifically measuring patient satisfaction across the five service dimensions. Each item was rated on a four-point Likert scale, where a score of 1 represented 'Unsatisfied,' 2 represented 'Less Satisfied,' 3 represented 'Satisfied,' and 4 represented 'Very Satisfied.'

The data collection procedure began with obtaining research permission from the directorate of Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital. Upon receiving approval, the researcher identified potential respondents who met the inclusion criteria in the pharmacy waiting area. The researcher then introduced themself, explained the research objectives, and assured data confidentiality to obtain written consent via an informed consent form. Once consent was given, the questionnaire was provided for self-administration. Throughout this process, the researcher remained available to provide assistance or clarification as needed. Each completed questionnaire was checked for completeness by the researcher before the respondent departed. The collected data were then compiled and prepared for analysis.

All collected data were subsequently processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, employing descriptive quantitative analysis. The analysis process commenced with an editing phase to ensure data completeness, followed by coding to assign numerical values to responses, and scoring according to the established scale. The cleaned data were then tabulated in SPSS and presented as frequency distribution tables and percentages. To determine the overall level of satisfaction, the total scores were further analyzed and categorized into the four established levels based on the specified reference standard.

Results and Discussion

The demographic characteristics of the 90 participants were analyzed based on gender, age, and highest educational attainment. In terms of gender distribution, the findings indicate that the majority of respondents were female, accounting for 64 individuals or 71.1% of the total sample, whereas male respondents numbered 26 (28.9%). This predominance of female patients aligns with the results of previous research. Studies conducted by Addani[9] and Chansanah[10] similarly demonstrated that females tend to exhibit higher morbidity rates and utilize hospital-based healthcare services more frequently than males.

Table 1. Sample characteristics (n= 90)

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	26	28,9
Female	64	71,1
Age (years)		
17 – 30	8	8,9
31 – 40	20	22,2
41 – 50	12	13,3
51 – 60	33	36,7
61 – 70	17	18,9
Education Level		
Did not complete primary school	24	26,7
Primary school	16	17,8
Junior high school/equivalent	30	33,3
Senior high school/equivalent	15	16,7
Bachelor's degree	5	5,6

Furthermore, an analysis based on age groups revealed that the largest cohort of respondents was within the 51–60 year age range, comprising 33 individuals (36.7%). The productive age group of 31–40

years constituted the second-largest group with 20 respondents (22.2%), followed by the 61–70 year age group with 17 respondents (18.9%). This suggests that the principal users of pharmaceutical services in this study were patients in their mature and early elderly years.

Concurrently, when examining the highest level of education attained, the respondent profile was most prominently characterized by junior high school graduates, who numbered 30 (33.3%). This was followed by respondents who had not completed primary school, accounting for 24 individuals (26.7%). The number of respondents with primary school and senior high school qualifications was nearly equivalent, at 17.8% and 16.7%, respectively. The cohort with a bachelor's degree represented a minority, with only 5 respondents (5.6%). These data illustrate that pharmaceutical services at Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital are predominantly accessed by individuals with primary to secondary levels of education.

Patient satisfaction was assessed across five core dimensions of service quality: responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Overall, the findings indicated positive levels of satisfaction across all five dimensions. The responsiveness dimension assessed patients' perceptions of the pharmacy staff's promptness and speed in delivering services and addressing patient needs. The analysis revealed that the majority of respondents were satisfied with this aspect, which received the highest average satisfaction score among all dimensions. Specifically, nearly all respondents (98.9%) provided a positive rating (satisfied or very satisfied) for the clarity of the medication information provided. Similarly, a vast majority of patients were satisfied with the staff's speed in responding to complaints (90%) and their ability to resolve issues (90%). This finding is consistent with research by Sinala et al.[11] which highlighted that the speed and responsiveness of pharmacy staff are crucial factors for patient satisfaction. Furthermore, this aligns with the service standards mandated by the Republic of Indonesia's Ministry of Health Regulation No. 30 of 2019, which emphasizes the importance of communication and responsiveness in pharmaceutical services.

The reliability dimension focused on the pharmacy's ability to provide accurate and dependable services, including service speed, medication availability, and staff courtesy. On this dimension, most respondents also expressed satisfaction. More than half of the respondents (57.8%) were very satisfied with the staff's readiness to assist, and 52.2% were very satisfied with the staff's friendliness and smiling demeanor. Although a small minority of respondents (13.3%) expressed dissatisfaction with medication availability, the overall perception of service reliability remained highly positive. These results support the findings of Sinala et al.[11] who identified speed, drug availability, and friendly service as key drivers of patient satisfaction.

The assurance dimension evaluated the knowledge, competence, and trustworthiness demonstrated by the pharmacy staff. It is essential for patients to feel confident that they are being served by professionals and receiving medications of guaranteed quality and accuracy. The study revealed a high level of satisfaction in this dimension. The vast majority of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the staff's knowledge and skills (100%), the guarantee of medication quality (91.1%), and the conformity of the medication to the prescription (96.7%). Notably, no respondents reported dissatisfaction on this dimension, indicating a high degree of patient trust in the competency of the pharmacy staff at Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital, which is consistent with the findings of Sinala et al.[11]

The empathy dimension measured the staff's ability to provide personalized and sincere attention to each patient, irrespective of their background. Respondents gave very positive assessments for this dimension. A majority of respondents (96.7%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the attention staff gave to their complaints. Critically, all respondents (100%) felt that staff provided services equitably, without regard to social status. This indicates that the value of empathy is well-implemented by the staff, which corresponds with the research by Novaryantiin (2021) on the importance of pharmacist loyalty and care in serving patients.

The tangibles dimension assessed physically apparent aspects, such as the cleanliness and comfort of the waiting area and the appearance of the staff. The results showed that respondents were generally satisfied. A large majority of respondents (94.4%) perceived the pharmacy staff as having a clean and professional appearance. Moreover, all patients (100%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the cleanliness and aesthetic of the pharmacy environment. This positive perception of the physical environment, as also identified in the research by Sinala et al.[11] contributes to the overall patient experience while waiting for and receiving medication services.

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis from the research conducted at Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital in 2024, it can be concluded that patients were generally satisfied with the pharmaceutical services provided. This satisfaction assessment was based on the measurement of five dimensions of service quality. Specifically, the highest level of satisfaction was observed in the responsiveness dimension, with a percentage of 69.72%. Meanwhile, the other dimensions evaluated include tangibles, which scored 32.21%, followed by empathy at 27.19%, assurance at 19.60%, and reliability at 16.00%. Although there was variation in the scores for each dimension, the cumulative assessment leads to the overall conclusion that patient perception of pharmaceutical services at Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital is positive. For the management of the Pharmacy Installation at Munyang Kute Regional General Hospital, it is recommended to continuously strive for quality improvement in service delivery. Improvement efforts could focus on aspects that, according to this study, still have room for optimization. These include enhancing patient education regarding medication side effects and providing information on preventive health measures to empower patients in managing their own health. In addition to improving informational services, it is also advisable to address and enhance the quality of supporting facilities and infrastructure, such as ensuring the availability of adequate and comfortable seating in the pharmacy waiting area to improve patient comfort. Furthermore, for future researchers interested in a similar topic, it is recommended that this research be expanded upon. Future studies could investigate factors beyond the five measured service dimensions that may also influence consumer satisfaction. By exploring additional variables, a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the dynamics of patient satisfaction within the healthcare setting is anticipated.

References

1. Greene SM, Tuzzio L, Cherkin D. A Framework for Making Patient-Centered Care Front and Center. Perm J. 2012 Sep;16(3):49–53.
2. Nasrabad RR. Service Line Management: A New Paradigm in Health Care System. Int J Med Res Heal Sci. 2016;5(12):208–11.
3. Laila FN. Pengaruh Kualitas Pelayanan Pada Kepuasan Pasien Dan Konsekuensinya Terhadap Loyalitas di Rumah Sakit. J Kesehat Ilm Indones. 2024 Dec 19;9(2).
4. Yunanda G, Putra AS. Hubungan Citra Rumah Sakit dengan Loyalitas Pasien Rawat Jalan RSI Ibnu Sina Padang Panjang Tahun 2024. J Public Adm Manag Stud. 2024;2(2):73–9.
5. Mohiuddin A. The Excellence of Pharmacy Practice. Inov Pharm. 2020 Jan 28;11(1):3.
6. Wiedenmayer K, Summers RS, Mackie CA, Gous AGS, Everard M. Developing pharmacy practice: A focus on patient care. World Health Organization and International Pharmaceutical Federation; 2006.
7. Barghouth D, Al-Abdallah GM, Abdallah AB. Pharmacy service factors and pharmacy performance: the role of patient satisfaction in community pharmacies. Int J Pharm Healthc Mark. 2021 Aug 31;15(3):410–28.
8. Parasuraman A, Zeithaml VA, Berry LL. A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Future Research. J Mark. 1985;49(4):41.
9. Addani A. Pengaruh Karakteristik Masyarakat terhadap Utilisasi Puskesmas di Kabupaten Bireuen Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Tahun 2007. Universitas Sumatera Utara; 2008.
10. Chasanah U. Pengukuran Kinerja Berdasarkan Indeks Kepuasan Masyarakat Pada Puskesmas Kalirungkut Surabaya. Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Indonesia; 2013.
11. Sinala S, Salim H, Ardilla NR. Tingkat kepuasan pasien terhadap pelayan obat di Puskesmas Baraka Kecamatan Baraka Kabupaten Enrekang. Media Farm. 2018 Jun 30;14(1):51.