

**A STUDY ON SERVICE QUALITY & ITS EFFECT ON PATIENT
SATISFACTION AT OUSHADHI PANCHAKARMA AYURVEDA
HOSPITAL, THRISSUR**

Project Report

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the award of the degree of

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



University of Calicut

By

BLESSY BAIJU

(YPAWMBA019)

IV Semester MBA

Under the guidance of

Dr. NIJO VARGHESE

Assistant Professor



NAIPUNNYA BUSINESS SCHOOL

Affiliated to University of Calicut, Accredited by NAAC with B++

Approved by AICTE, ISO 9001:2015 Certified

Pongam, Koratty East, Thrissur Dist.

Kerala. Pin: 680 308

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CERTIFICATE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

This is to certify that Ms. BLESSY BAIJU of MBA 2021-20 Batch has successfully completed the 4th semester MBA Project work at Oushadi Panchakarma Ayurvedic Hospital, Thrissur for a duration of 60 days from April 1st to May 31st

Dr. Jacob P. M
Director, NBS)

Place: Thrissur

Date: May 31st

CERTIFICATE FROM THE FACULTY GUIDE

This is to certify that the project, entitled “ THE STUDY ON SERVICE QUALITY AND ITS EFFECTS ON PATIENT SATISFACTION “submitted to the Calicut University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Business Administration is a record of original project work done by Blessy Baiju during the period from April 1st to May 31st of her study under my supervision and guidance

Dr. Nijo Varghese

Assistant professor, NBS

Place: Thrissur

Date: May 31st

DECLARATION

I, **Blessy Baiju** hereby declare that the project report entitled “ **A STUDY ON SERVICE QUALITY AND ITS EFFECT ON PATIENT SATISFACTION AT OUSHADHI PANCHAKARMA AYURVEDA HOSPITAL, THRISSUR**” has been prepared by me submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of **Master of Business Administration**, is a record of original work done by me under the supervision and guidance of **Dr. Nijo Varghese , Assistant Professor**, Naipunnya Business School, Pongam , Koratty East ,Thrissur.

I also declare that this Project work has not been submitted by me fully or partly for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Title or recognition before any authority.

Place: Koratty East, Thrissur

Blessy Baiju

Date :

YPAWMBA019

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Place: Koratty East, Thrissur

Blessy Baiju

Date:

YPAWMBA019

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the healthcare sector, especially in specialized treatments like those offered by ayurvedic hospitals, the service quality is a critical determinant of patient satisfaction. Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurveda Hospital is a well-known hospital that practices the ancient Indian medical system of ayurveda. Studying service quality and patient satisfaction at this ayurveda hospital gives an opportunity to understand how these two factors are related.

Service quality refers to the overall effectiveness and excellence of the service provided by healthcare providers to their patients. A high level of service quality ensures that patients receive the best care and have a positive experience during their treatment. It encompasses various aspects of the patient's experience, starting from their first interaction with the hospital to the completion of their treatment. Service quality shape the overall patient experience. In an ayurvedic hospital, these could include the peaceful and calming environment, the knowledge and behaviour of the ayurvedic doctors and therapists, the effectiveness of the treatments and medicines prescribed, and the efficiency of the administrative and support staff.

Patient satisfaction is about how happy patients are with the healthcare they get and their experience at the hospital. Patient satisfaction is influenced by various factors, including the quality of care, communication with healthcare providers, waiting times, and the overall patient experience. when patients are satisfied, it indicates that they have received care that aligns with their expectations and requirements. Satisfied patients are more likely to have better health outcomes they are also more likely to recommend the healthcare facility to others, which contributes to the reputation and success of the hospital.

By studying the effect of service quality on patient satisfaction at this hospital, this research aims to uncover which specific aspects of service quality have the most significant effect on patient satisfaction . The findings of this study will be very useful for Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurvedic Hospital. By understanding what drives patient satisfaction, the hospital can improve its service strategies, allocate resources better, and make targeted improvements to enhance the overall patient experience.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Oushadhi Panchkarma Ayurveda Hospital aims to deliver high-quality services to ensure patient satisfaction and well-being. However, there is a lack of understanding regarding the effect of service quality on patient satisfaction, as well as an assessment of the current levels of service quality and patient satisfaction within the hospital. This knowledge gap hinders the hospital's ability to identify areas for improvements and take necessary actions to enhance the patient experience. Effective service quality plays a significant role in determining patient satisfaction. Without a clear understanding of service quality and patient satisfaction levels, the hospital cannot pinpoint areas needing improvements. By measuring the levels of service quality and patient satisfaction, the research intends to provide insights that will guide the hospital to enhance patient experiences and satisfaction.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the level of Patient Satisfaction.
2. To identify the level of Service Quality.
3. To study the effect of Service Quality on Patient Satisfaction.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research study on "Service Quality and its effect on Patient Satisfaction at Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurveda Hospital in Thrissur" aims to understand the service quality and its subsequent effect on patient satisfaction. It primarily focuses on analyzing the experiences of inpatients undergone ayurvedic treatments of seven days or more at the hospital . This study is conducted over a period of 56 days, providing an overview of service quality and patient satisfaction during this time frame. The study will look into various dimensions of service quality such as Responsiveness, Reliability, Empathy, Assurance, and Tangibility, and their effect on patient satisfaction. The research will focus on measuring how satisfied the patients are with their experiences at the hospital. By gathering feedback directly from inpatients, the study will identify the overall service quality and patient satisfaction levels. By studying these elements, the research can identify areas where improvements can be made to enhance patient satisfaction by improving the quality of services.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This study will employ a **Descriptive Research Design** to examine the effect of service quality on patient satisfaction at Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurveda Hospital in Thrissur. By focusing on descriptive research, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of service quality and patient satisfaction levels, facilitating an understanding of how these factors interplay and effect one another.

Population of the study: Population refers to the complete count of individuals who are the subjects or respondents of a particular study. In the context of this research, the population of interest comprises of all inpatients who undergone ayurvedic treatments of seven or more days at Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurveda Hospital, located in Thrissur .Inpatients from various demographics who have utilized services at Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurveda Hospital are included in this population.

Sampling Technique: In this study, **Convenience Sampling** technique was employed .This technique involves selecting respondents who are readily available ,easily accessible ,willing to participate, and familiar with the services provided making it an efficient method for gathering data .

Sample Unit: The sample unit is the individual entity or element within the population that is included in the study. In this research, the sample unit is each inpatient who meets the criteria of having undergone ayurvedic treatment for seven or more days at the hospital.

Sample Size: The researcher has collected data of all inpatients who undergone seven or more days of any treatments during the period of the study. The sample size for this study was 104 eligible inpatients.

Sources of Data: For this research study ,Data Collection was carried out in two ways. Primary Data Collection and Secondary Data Collection.Primary Data Collection involved gathering information directly from the patients using structured scheduled forms with statements. On the other hand, secondary data refers to information that has already been collected by someone else and has undergone a statistical process. It can be sourced from published journals, reports, textbooks, publications, company websites, and magazines. For this research study secondary data was obtained from existing records and materials within the organisation. This included publicity materials, and other relevant documents related to Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurveda Hospital.

Questionnaire Design: The data collection process involved using structured scheduled forms with statements to gather information directly from patients. These schedules were carefully designed to capture specific details about the quality of service they received and their satisfaction as patients. The content of these schedules was developed based on a thorough review of relevant literature. Printed paper copies of these schedules were then distributed to patients in both English and Malayalam languages to ensure accessibility and understanding. Patients were asked to rate each statement using a **5-point scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly**

disagree." This approach provided a clear and structured method for patients to express their experiences regarding the quality of services received at the hospital.

Tools of Data Analysis: In this study, demographic data including Age, Gender, Occupation, and Previous Experience were analyzed using **Percentage analysis in Excel** to understand the characteristics of the 104 inpatients who undergone ayurvedic treatments. **Mean analysis using SPSS software** was employed to identify the level of Patient Satisfaction and Service Quality. **Linear Regression**, also conducted with SPSS software, was used to study the individual effect of each dimension of service quality on patient satisfaction and also to evaluate the overall effect of Service Quality on Patient Satisfaction. These analysis were conducted to comprehensively evaluate the experiences of the patients regarding the services provided at the hospital.

Hypotheses of the Study

H1: There is a significant effect of Service Quality on Patient Satisfaction.

H1a: There is a significant effect of Tangibility on Patient Satisfaction.

H1b: There is a significant effect of Reliability on Patient Satisfaction.

H1c: There is a significant effect of Responsiveness on Patient Satisfaction.

H1d: There is a significant effect of Empathy on Patient Satisfaction.

H1e: There is a significant effect of Assurance on Patient Satisfaction.

Period of Study: The study has taken 8 weeks to complete.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The small population size may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader patient population.
- The research was conducted at a single hospital, limiting the ability to generalize findings to other Ayurvedic centers.
- Variability in the length of inpatient stays (some patients staying longer than seven days) could potentially influence their perception of service quality and satisfaction.
- The study focused only effect of Service Quality on Patient Satisfaction. There may be other variables also effect Patient Satisfaction, which is not considered in this study.

1.7 INDUSTRY PROFILE

World scenario

Ayurveda is an ancient system of medicine that originated in India over 3,000 years ago. It focuses on achieving balance in the body, mind, and spirit through natural remedies, diet, lifestyle practices, and herbal treatments. The word "ayurveda" comes from the sanskrit words "ayur" (life) and "veda" (knowledge), meaning "knowledge of life"

The global ayurvedic healthcare and wellness industry is expected to experience remarkable growth, driven by the increasing demand for holistic and natural healing practices. Ayurveda hospital market size was valued at USD 1.3 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach USD 3.2 billion by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 11.8% during the forecasted period 2024 to 2030. This growth is because more people want natural healing methods. They like ayurveda because it focuses on harmony between the mind, body, and spirit. The growth is due to several key factors:-

Preference for Natural Healing Methods: Many people are favoring natural healing methods over conventional medicine. This shift aligns well with the principles of Ayurveda, which emphasizes holistic well-being by promoting harmony among the mind, body, and spirit. Ayurveda's approach includes using natural remedies, diet, and lifestyle changes to maintain balance and health. This resonates with individuals seeking a more integrated and preventive approach to health, as it not only addresses physical symptoms but also considers emotional and spiritual aspects, leading to a more comprehensive sense of well-being.

Rise of Medical Tourism: Medical tourism is on the rise, with many people traveling abroad for specialized treatments. Ayurveda, known for its natural and holistic healing approach, draws numerous tourists worldwide. These travelers seek authentic Ayurvedic treatments and therapies, which focus on balancing the mind, body, and spirit. This appeal of comprehensive and natural healthcare has made destinations known for Ayurveda, such as India, popular among those looking for alternative medical solutions and wellness retreats, blending travel with health improvement.

Emergence of Dedicated Ayurvedic Wellness Destinations: Specialized Ayurvedic wellness destinations have emerged, offering various services to meet the rising demand for holistic healthcare. These destinations provide comprehensive treatment packages, including traditional therapies like panchakarma and rejuvenation treatments. They cater to those seeking a complete wellness experience, focusing on natural and integrative methods to improve health and well-being. By offering these specialized services, Ayurvedic wellness centers attract people looking for more than just medical treatments, but a holistic approach to their overall health.

Increasing Awareness and Acceptance : Awareness and acceptance of ayurveda as a valid alternative or complementary healthcare system are increasing. This growth is driven by educational efforts, media coverage, and endorsements from healthcare professionals. More people are learning about Ayurveda's benefits through various platforms, leading to greater trust and interest in its natural and holistic approach. As a result, Ayurveda is becoming more recognized and respected in the broader medical community and among the general public, who seek comprehensive health solutions.

Government Support and Regulation: In countries where Ayurveda is practiced, governments provide strong support and regulations for the industry. They create policies that encourage the use of traditional medicine like Ayurveda, allocate funds for research to improve treatments, and enforce quality control measures to ensure safety and effectiveness. These efforts help the Ayurvedic industry grow and gain credibility by maintaining high standards. Government support also boosts public trust in these ancient practices, ensuring they meet modern healthcare expectations while preserving cultural heritage. Overall, these measures contribute to the advancement and acceptance of Ayurveda as a valuable healthcare option worldwide.

Expansion of Product Offerings: Ayurvedic products such as herbal supplements, cosmetics, and dietary supplements have seen increasing global popularity. This expansion meets diverse consumer needs, boosting industry growth. The wide availability of Ayurvedic products caters to varying preferences, promoting their acceptance and integration into global markets. As consumers seek natural and holistic health solutions, Ayurvedic offerings fulfill these demands, contributing to the industry's projected growth in healthcare and wellness.

Shift Towards Preventive Healthcare: There's a global shift towards preventive healthcare, with individuals seeking proactive measures to maintain health and prevent diseases. Ayurveda aligns well with this trend by promoting personalized approaches to diet, lifestyle, and natural therapies aimed at maintaining health and preventing diseases before they occur. Its holistic principles and emphasis on balance and wellness resonate with individuals seeking alternative and complementary health practices. This shift towards preventive healthcare underscores Ayurveda's relevance and adoption as people value strategies that support overall health and longevity through natural and personalized means.

Research and Development: Increasing scientific research and clinical trials are being conducted to validate the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatments. Collaboration between Ayurvedic practitioners and modern scientists is leading to the development of evidence-based practices, which enhance the credibility and acceptance of Ayurveda in the global healthcare system.

Entry into New Markets: Ayurveda is expanding into new international markets, including North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific regions. Strategic partnerships, marketing efforts, and consumer awareness campaigns are driving the adoption of Ayurvedic products and services in these regions.

Indian scenario

India, the birthplace of ayurveda, remains the leading hub for ayurvedic healthcare services & wellness offerings. India's rich heritage, vast knowledge repository, and well-established ayurvedic infrastructure have positioned the country as the preferred destination for individuals seeking authentic ayurvedic treatments and therapies. Within India, there are many states that stand out as major ayurvedic healthcare service & wellness hubs, leveraging their expertise and traditional ayurvedic practices to cater to both domestic and international clients. The ayurveda hospital industry in India has been experiencing steady growth in recent years. Between 2019 and 2024, the industry is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of around 12-14%. As of 2024, the ayurvedic healthcare service in India remains highly competitive and fragmented.

Status of Ayurveda in India

Ayurveda in India holds a significant presence within the healthcare system, supported by a substantial infrastructure and practitioner base. As of recent data, there are approximately 399,000 registered Ayurvedic medical practitioners, along with 25,723 dispensaries and 2,818 hospitals offering Ayurvedic treatments. These facilities provide a total of 56,589 hospital beds dedicated to Ayurvedic care. The education sector contributes with 243 undergraduate teaching institutions and 55 upgraded postgraduate departments, ensuring a steady supply of trained professionals and advancing research in Ayurveda. Additionally, the pharmaceutical sector is robust, with 8,400 pharmacies manufacturing Ayurvedic medicines, catering to both domestic demand and international markets. This infrastructure underscores Ayurveda's integral role in India's healthcare landscape, offering traditional and holistic healthcare solutions to a diverse population.

State scenario

Ayurveda, mother of all healing which rooted from ancient vedic culture. The alternative medicine system is believed to be originated in Indian subcontinent. Ayurveda can be figured as one of the oldest holistic system of healing all around the globe. In India, Kerala is the most probable state where ayurveda flourished with its own identity as a main stream treatment system. A number of best ayurvedic hospitals are there in their best suited position in Kerala. The landscape, forests, mountains, growth of herbs and medicinal plants along with its climate makes the state more suitable for ayurveda.

Many ayurvedic hospitals are operational in Kerala. Ayurvedic treatment is highly popular in Kerala primarily due to the adequate physical infrastructure facilities they provide, along with the presence of extremely qualified, trained, and experienced ayurvedic physicians. Additionally, ayurveda plays a significant role in Kerala's tourism industry. These factors stand as key reasons for ayurveda becoming more popular in the state."

Ayurvedic hospitals in Kerala

Kerala can be designated as the global medical tourism destination. People from all around the world visiting Kerala both for enjoying the natural beauty of the land and to experience the traditional and centuries old treatment mechanism in ayurveda. Hundreds of ayurveda treatment centres are there in Kerala.

Some of the best ayurveda hospitals are listed below:-

- Kottakkal arya vaidya sala
- Ayur bethania
- Vaidyaratnam oushadhasala
- Dhatri ayurveda hospital and panchakarma centre
- Ayurveda hospital Kerala
- Cochin arya vaidya sala
- Kandamkulathy ayursoukhyam
- Pankajakasthuri ayurveda medical college and hospital
- Kottakkal arya vaidyasala

Evolution of Ayurveda

- Ayurvedic healing practices & wellness traditions have a very long history going back thousands of years, with details of various treatments, therapies, and healing methods described in ancient texts and manuscripts.
- In the early 1900s, there was a renewed interest in ayurveda, which led to the setting up of ayurvedic hospitals and clinics, primarily in India, where they offered traditional ayurvedic treatments consultations & wellness practices.
- During the 1970s and 1980s, there was an increase in establishing ayurvedic research institutes and colleges, which helped in further promoting the study and practice of ayurvedic healthcare services & wellness disciplines.
- In the 1990s, the commercialization of ayurvedic products and services began, resulting in the emergence of ayurvedic resorts and wellness centers that catered to both Indian and international clients.
- In the 2000s saw a significant increase in global demand for ayurvedic healthcare services & wellness offerings, driven by the growing popularity of medical tourism and the integration of ayurvedic practices into mainstream healthcare systems.
- In the 2010s, efforts were made towards standardization, quality control, and scientific validation of ayurvedic therapies, which contributed to the industry's credibility and wider acceptance.
- In the 2020s have witnessed a surge in demand for ayurvedic healthcare services , fueled by the covid-19 pandemic and the increased focus on preventive healthcare, boosting immunity, and overall holistic well-being.
- By 2024, ayurvedic healthcare services are expected to be widely recognized as complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies, integrated into mainstream healthcare systems globally

Government Initiatives

Government initiatives in ayurvedic healthcare services: AYUSH

The Indian government has taken significant steps to promote ayurvedic healthcare services under the Ministry of AYUSH, which stands for ayurveda, yoga & naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, And Homeopathy. AYUSH aims to develop education, research, and the propagation of indigenous alternative medicine systems.

Ayurveda, one of the oldest healthcare systems, originated in India over 5000 years ago. Recognizing its potential, the Indian government established the department of Indian systems of medicine and homeopathy (ISM&H) in 1995, which was restructured as the department of AYUSH in 2003. In 2014, the ministry of AYUSH was created to give focused attention to these traditional practices.

NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION (NAM): Launched in 2014, NAM aims to enhance the availability and quality of AYUSH healthcare services. It focuses on improving AYUSH education institutions, strengthening regulatory frameworks, and promoting quality control in ayurveda and other traditional medicine practices.

AYUSH HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTERS: As part of the AYUSH man Bharat Scheme, the government plans to establish 12,500 AYUSH health and wellness centers across India by 2022. These centers aim to provide comprehensive primary health care services, emphasizing preventive and promotive healthcare through ayurveda and other AYUSH systems.

ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF AYURVEDA (AIIA): Established in Delhi in 2017, AIIA serves as a model institute for ayurveda. It offers postgraduate and doctoral courses and focuses on research and patient care. AIIA aims to bring ayurveda into the global healthcare system by showcasing its effectiveness through modern scientific validation.

AYUSH HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES: The government has supported the establishment and upgrading of AYUSH hospitals and dispensaries. These facilities provide affordable and accessible ayurvedic treatments to the public, integrating traditional medicine with modern healthcare practices.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AYURVEDA (NIA): NIA is an autonomous body under the ministry of AYUSH located in Jaipur. It promotes higher education and research in ayurveda, offering postgraduate and doctoral programs. NIA also provides clinical services and conducts research to validate ayurvedic practices.

CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN AYURVEDIC SCIENCES (CCRAS): CCRAS is an autonomous body under the ministry of AYUSH. It focuses on scientific research in ayurveda, including drug development, clinical trials, and standardization of ayurvedic medicines. CCRAS aims to provide scientific evidence for the efficacy of ayurvedic treatments.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPP): The government encourages partnerships with private sector organizations to promote ayurveda. These collaborations aim to enhance research, develop new products, and improve the quality and accessibility of ayurvedic healthcare services.

DIGITAL INITIATIVES: The government has launched various digital platforms to promote ayurveda, such as the e-aushadhi portal for licensing of AYUSH drugs, and the AYUSH grid project, which aims to digitize the entire AYUSH sector. These initiatives enhance transparency, improve service delivery, and facilitate research and education in ayurveda.

STANDARDIZATION AND QUALITY CONTROL: The government has set up institutions like the pharmacopoeia commission for Indian medicine & homoeopathy (PCIM&H) to develop standards for ayurvedic medicines and ensure their quality, safety, and efficacy. Through these initiatives, the Indian government aims to preserve and promote the rich heritage of ayurveda, integrate it with modern healthcare, and provide comprehensive, affordable, and quality healthcare services to the population

Challenges in Ayurveda Sector

Lack of Standardization: Ayurvedic treatments and practices can vary widely among practitioners, which poses challenges in maintaining consistent quality and standards across the sector. Differences in training, experience, and regional practices contribute to this variability. Standardization efforts aim to establish uniform guidelines for diagnosis, treatment protocols, and quality control measures. Implementing standardized practices can enhance credibility, ensure patient safety, and facilitate better integration with mainstream healthcare systems.

Limited Trained Professionals: There is a shortage of well-trained and qualified Ayurvedic practitioners, particularly in urban areas where demand is higher. This scarcity limits access to reliable Ayurvedic healthcare services for many individuals. Increasing educational opportunities and training programs in Ayurveda can help address this gap. Collaborations between educational institutions, healthcare providers, and governments are crucial to expand the pool of competent practitioners.

Limited Insurance Coverage: Many health insurance plans do not cover Ayurvedic treatments or services, which can make them financially prohibitive for patients. This lack of coverage hinders accessibility and affordability, particularly for those who rely on insurance for healthcare expenses. Advocacy efforts to include Ayurvedic services in insurance coverage options are essential to broaden access and reduce financial barriers. Demonstrating the cost-effectiveness and benefits of Ayurvedic treatments through research and patient outcomes can support these advocacy efforts.

Lack of Research and Evidence: There is a need for more strong research and scientific evidence to validate the effectiveness, safety, and mechanisms of action of Ayurvedic treatments. Limited research restricts acceptance and integration of Ayurveda into mainstream healthcare systems. Investing in clinical trials, observational studies, and systematic reviews can generate the necessary evidence base. Collaboration between researchers, healthcare providers, and funding agencies is crucial to prioritize and conduct high-quality research in Ayurvedic medicine.

Public Awareness and Misconceptions: Many people have limited knowledge about Ayurvedic healthcare and may hold misconceptions or scepticism about its efficacy and safety. This lack of awareness can deter individuals from seeking Ayurvedic treatments despite potential benefits. Educational campaigns, media outreach, and patient testimonials can help dispel myths, increase understanding, and promote informed decision-making about Ayurvedic healthcare options. Engaging with healthcare professionals and integrating Ayurveda into public health initiatives can also enhance awareness and acceptance.

Preservation of Traditional Knowledge: Ensuring the preservation and transmission of traditional Ayurvedic knowledge and practices to future generations is essential. Rapid urbanization, modernization, and globalization pose challenges to the continuity and authenticity of traditional Ayurvedic practices. Efforts to document, digitize, and institutionalize Ayurvedic knowledge, along with supporting educational programs and apprenticeships, can safeguard this cultural heritage. Collaboration between traditional practitioners, academic institutions, and cultural authorities is crucial for preserving and promoting traditional Ayurvedic wisdom.

Regulatory Challenges: Inconsistent or unclear regulations governing Ayurvedic healthcare services across different regions or countries can create confusion and hinder sector growth. Harmonizing regulatory frameworks, establishing licensing standards, and enforcing quality control measures are essential steps to ensure patient safety and enhance credibility. Collaboration between policymakers, industry stakeholders, and regulatory bodies can facilitate the development of effective regulatory policies that support the growth and integration of Ayurvedic healthcare into mainstream healthcare systems.

Limited Accessibility: Ayurvedic healthcare services may not be readily accessible or available in remote or rural areas, limiting their reach to certain populations. Infrastructure development, telemedicine initiatives, and mobile health clinics can improve accessibility by bringing Ayurvedic care closer to underserved communities. Public-private partnerships and community engagement efforts are vital to expand access to affordable and culturally appropriate Ayurvedic healthcare services across diverse geographic settings.

Affordability Concerns: While some Ayurvedic treatments are cost-effective, others can be expensive, making them inaccessible to individuals with limited financial resources. Price transparency, subsidized healthcare programs, and insurance coverage expansion can mitigate affordability concerns and improve financial accessibility. Promoting sustainable sourcing practices and local production of Ayurvedic medicines can also help reduce costs and enhance affordability for patients.

Quality Control: Maintaining consistent quality standards for Ayurvedic healthcare services is crucial to ensure patient safety and treatment efficacy. Challenges such as variability in raw materials, manufacturing practices, and quality assurance protocols can impact product quality and reliability. Establishing Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), quality testing laboratories, and certification processes can uphold standards for authenticity and efficacy in Ayurvedic products and services. Continuous monitoring, enforcement of regulatory standards, and consumer awareness initiatives are essential for maintaining high-quality standards across the Ayurvedic healthcare sector.

Lack of Data and Documentation: There is a need for comprehensive data collection, documentation, and record-keeping of Ayurvedic healthcare services and patient outcomes. Limited data availability hinders evidence-based decision-making, research advancements, and quality improvement initiatives within the sector. Developing standardized data collection tools, electronic health records (EHR) systems, and patient registries can facilitate data aggregation and analysis.

FUTURE OF AYURVEDIC HEALTHCARE SECTOR

Over the past couple of years, the health industry has seen a huge transformation due to the pandemic. More people are turning to alternative treatments and holistic lifestyles, which has led to a surge in demand for ayurveda. With everything changing because of the pandemic, more folks are interested in different ways to stay healthy. Ayurveda, an old way of healing from India, has become really popular because it focuses on natural treatments and making personalized plans for each person's health needs. People like it because it's not just about fixing one problem but taking care of the whole body and mind.

When the pandemic hit, a lot of people started looking for different ways to stay healthy because regular hospitals were really busy. This made people curious about things like ayurveda, an old way of healing. They wanted to try out different methods since the usual healthcare systems were facing big challenges. Promoting wellness has become an essential task in the current times, especially in the wake of the covid-19 pandemic, which has highlighted the importance of maintaining physical and mental well-being. The crisis caused by the pandemic has shown us the vulnerabilities of our healthcare systems and the need for a more holistic approach to health and wellness. By the end of 2020, studies showed that more and more people were searching online for ayurveda treatments, especially since the pandemic started in March.

Notably, the United States, along with countries such as the UK, Japan, and Germany, witnessed a substantial portion of their populations turning to ayurveda for health and wellness support. Approximately 25% of the US population and 17% collectively from the UK, Japan, and Germany sought information and services related to ayurveda during this period. This growing interest has translated into a booming market for natural healing solutions, which is currently valued at 1.2 billion dollars globally. Despite its roots in India, where ayurveda originated thousands of years ago, other nations such as the USA, Germany, Japan, and the UK dominate the market in terms of size and revenue.

1.8 COMPANY PROFILE

The pharmaceutical corporation (Indian medicines) Kerala Ltd or Oushadhi is a herbal ayurvedic medicines production company under the direct control of Kerala Government. Directly controlled by health and family welfare department of Kerala State Government and is governed by a board of directors, appointed by the Government of Kerala. Originated as Sree Kerala Varma govt. Ayurvedic pharmacy in 1941 at the instance of his highness the Maharaja of Cochin, for the supply of medicines to govt.ayurvedic hospitals in Thrissur and erstwhile princely family of Cochin State in 1959 it is converted and registered as co-operative society, and named as Sree Kerala Varma ayurvedic Co-Operative Pharmacy & Stores Limited. On 08.09.1975 incorporated as a company under the companies act 1956 and renamed as the Pharmaceutical Corporation (I.M) Kerala Ltd, Thrissur and its operations started on 10.07.76 with the takeover of the business of SKVAC pharmacy. Oushadhi is the largest producer of ayurveda medicines in public sector in India. One among the few public sector companies, consistently making profit and paying dividend to Government of Kerala. Supplies medicines to dispensaries under ISM department of state and these medicines reach lakhs of patients at free of cost.

Oushadhi produces 498 ayurveda formulations –both classical and proprietary. Sole supplier of medicines to government ayurveda hospital and dispensaries in Kerala. Supplier of ayurveda medicines to government hospitals and dispensaries of 19 other states, like Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Sikkim Etc. Caters to the need of public through a vast network over 650 dealers spread all over the nation.

Oushadhi has a 650 strong dealer network that spreads across the length and breadth of Kerala. It has made its presence felt in other states also through its various sales outlets in major cities of the country. Oushadhi has a modern full-fledged factory with state of art technology at Kuttanellur in Thrissur district of Kerala. While following traditional ayurvedic medicines manufacturing methods, this factory combines the elements of advanced technology by using modern machinery. A new factory unit was started in Muttathara of Thiruvananthapuram district thereby making a significant leap in improvisation of production infrastructure. To ensure quality to the highest order, Oushadhi has a well-equipped quality control lab that monitors every step of

production, right from the procurement of raw materials to packing and storing. Oushadhi also has GMP (good manufacturing practices) and ISO 9001:2015 certifications for its production unit and AYUSH accreditation for its lab. To ensure quality raw materials Oushadhi has set up medicinal plant garden where rare medicinal plants are nurtured. In view of strengthening ayurveda to keep pace with the fast changing world, Oushadhi has set up an R&D wing. This department has already developed many innovative methods for increasing the efficacy of medicines and manufacturing market friendly products. Oushadhi has also ventured into treatment field by starting a modern Panchakarma hospital in 2005.

Objectives

To manufacture and market high quality Ayurveda medicines

- To supply quality Ayurveda medicines to all Government Dispensaries and Hospitals in the state at subsidized price.
- To supply quality medicines to people at reasonable price through its 667 dealers.
- To act as a price stabilizing factor for Ayurveda medicines.

Development of new drugs through R & D to meet the market requirement.

- Promotion of Panchakarma Therapy.
- Promotion of medicinal plant cultivation.
- Buy back arrangement with farmers to ensure healthy return for the crops raised by them.
- Provide employment opportunity to the people.

Vision

A leading world class AYUSH medicine manufacturing organization by 2025.

Mission

Production and supply quality medicine at reasonable price.

Strengths

- Established brand image
- Continuous government support
- Huge market demand
- Dedicated work force

Core values

- Mutual trust and respect
- Customer satisfaction
- Quality control
- Professional ethics
- March with time

Product categories

- Immunity booster
- Food
- Asavams & arishtams
- Bhasma sindooram
- Choornam (compound drugs)
- Choornam (single drugs)
- Ghruthamgulika
- Kashayasookshma
- Choornamkashayachoornam
- Kashayam
- Kashayamtablet
- Lehyam
- Rasakriya
- Sandhana kriya

Future plans

- The future plans of the company include modernization of existing unit to improve quality and to meet the modern market requirement.
- Establishing branches in neighbouring state to promote Oushadhi.
- Establishment of export oriented production unit for selected high demanded item.
- Computerization of entire business.
- Establishment of new processing and value addition units.
- Strengthening of quality control and drug testing laboratory.
- Development of new drugs in nutraceutical cosmetic and baby product segments.

Departments

- Finance and Accounts
- Administration
- Human Resources
- Finance & Accounts
- Purchase
- Production
- Marketing
- Quality Control, Research & Development

Finance and accounts

The Finance and Accounts department plays a crucial role in supporting the company's economic decisions by providing essential quantitative data. They manage the company's funds, including working capital, to ensure smooth financial operations. The department maintains systematic financial records and ensures compliance with accounting standards, reflecting the true financial position and profitability of the company. They prepare detailed cost data, ensure timely payments including statutory obligations, and interpret financial statements to provide practical insights. Additionally, they strengthen internal controls through an internal audit wing, enhancing the overall financial integrity and efficiency of the company.

Human Resource

The Human Resource department is responsible for several critical functions. They manage the hiring of new employees and the promotion of existing staff, ensuring the right people are in the right roles. They handle wage revisions to keep salaries fair and competitive. Addressing legal issues related to administrative matters is another key responsibility, along with managing interactions and negotiations with trade unions. They organize training and development programs to enhance employee skills and knowledge. The department also ensures workplace safety and discipline by handling law and order issues. Promoting and maintaining a positive work culture is essential, as is overseeing the maintenance and upkeep of the workplace and its facilities.

Maintenance

The Maintenance Department is responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of all facilities and equipment. They handle regular inspections, repairs, and preventive maintenance to avoid disruptions in production. This department ensures that all machinery is functioning efficiently and safely, adhering to industry standards and regulations. They also manage utilities and infrastructure, ensuring that the physical environment supports optimal productivity. By maintaining the facilities and equipment in top condition, the Maintenance Department plays a crucial role in the overall efficiency and reliability of Oushadhi's operations.

Marketing & Sales

The Marketing and Sales department at Oushadhi Pharmaceutical Company holds a unique position as the sole supplier of Ayurveda medicines to all government hospitals, colleges, and dispensaries under the ISM department of the Government of Kerala. Additionally, they supply medicines to government hospitals and dispensaries in several other states, including Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Pondicherry, Rajasthan, Orissa, New Delhi, Karnataka, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. They also provide medicines to E.S.I dispensaries under the State E.S.I Department. Beyond institutional supply, Oushadhi serves the general public through a network of over 650 dealers across Kerala and specialized outlets in major cities throughout India.

Production

The Production department is responsible for creating 498 different varieties of medicines. A multi-disciplinary team of doctors oversees the production to ensure high standards. The medicines are produced following Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) norms, ensuring quality and safety at every stage of the production process. They produce modern dosage forms such as tablets, capsules, ointments, granules, and syrups. The department effectively combines traditional Ayurvedic practices with modern technology to deliver high-quality products.

Purchase

The Purchase department at Oushadhi Pharmaceutical Company is responsible for acquiring over 500 varieties of raw materials through an open tender process. They follow standardized procedures to verify the quality and variety of these materials. Over 45% of the raw materials are sourced directly from forests, ensuring the authenticity and potency of the ingredients. Additionally, the department has buy-back agreements with farmers to secure a reliable supply chain. They also maintain a comprehensive database of raw materials to manage inventory and sourcing effectively.

Quality control

The Quality Control Department at Oushadhi Pharmaceutical Company ensures that every batch of raw materials, processes, and final products meets predetermined standards through routine testing. Their functions include inspecting and approving the quality of raw materials, verifying quality during the production process, analyzing customer complaints to implement corrective and preventive actions, and verifying tender samples. They also inspect and approve finished medicines before release, verify technical data on labels and cartons, ensure the quality of packing materials, and have the authority to retain control samples of each batch until their expiration date.

Research and Development

The Research and Development (R&D) wing at Oushadhi, established in 2008, plays a crucial role in driving innovation and quality assurance. With a well-equipped AYUSH accredited laboratory and a team of experts in Pharmacy, Botany,

Biochemistry, and Microbiology, led by an Ayurvedic Doctor, the R&D lab is on the path to NABL Accreditation. Its primary objectives include developing new products in response to market demands, establishing quality control parameters, standardizing raw materials and finished products, and optimizing manufacturing processes to reduce costs and processing times through scientific methods. The R&D wing also engages in collaborative projects with organizations like TBGRI, CFTRI, NMPB, SMPB, and KAU, facilitates interdisciplinary projects and training for postgraduate scholars, conducts activities for the standardization of Asava-Arishta, issues product certifications for obtaining drug licenses, and verifies outside samples to provide certification reports.

OUSHADHI PANCHAKARMA AYURVEDA HOSPITAL

Kerala, often referred to as "God's own country," is renowned globally for its unique attractions, among which traditional Ayurveda holds a special place. The state is home to over 12,000 traditional healers and more than 800 Ayurvedic medicine manufacturing units, reflecting the deep-rooted presence of this ancient practice. Among these, Oushadhi stands out as the largest manufacturer of Ayurvedic medicine in the government sector in India. Located in Thrissur, the cultural heart of Kerala, the Oushadhi panchakarma ayurveda hospital & Research Institute is a prominent facility offering a wide range of Ayurvedic treatments established on October 18, 2004, the hospital started as a facility catering to both in-patients and out-patients and has since grown into a well-equipped 75-bed hospital. Under the leadership of Senior Executive Dr. Rajithan and Assistant Manager PM Sudha, the Oushadhi panchakarma ayurveda hospital and Research Institute continues to thrive. The hospital is a branch of Oushadhi, a government-owned Ayurvedic medicine manufacturing company.

One of the significant features of the Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurveda Hospital is its commitment to providing affordable yet high-quality treatments using medicines produced by Oushadhi. The hospital's location in Thrissur makes it accessible while adding to the cultural richness of the area. As part of its rejuvenation program, the hospital offers free meditation and yoga classes to all inmates, aiming to rejuvenate both body and mind. With a team of highly skilled and experienced Ayurvedic practitioners, the hospital ensures that patients receive personalized care tailored to their individual health needs.

Research plays a crucial role at the Oushadhi panchakarma ayurveda hospital, with a dedicated clinical trial cell conducting studies on chronic diseases and conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, rheumatic complaints, skin diseases, headaches, kidney stones, and cholesterol issues. These research activities focus on using newly developed medicines from Oushadhi's R&D wing, highlighting the institute's role in advancing Ayurvedic medicine.

Oushadhi's entry into healthcare through the Panchakarma Hospital and Research Institute represents a diversification of its operations, aiming to provide quality treatment to the public. This blend of tradition and modernity attracts people globally,

enhancing the reputation of the Ayurvedic system of medicine. Panchakarma therapies, central to Ayurvedic management, are a significant attraction at the hospital. These therapies are considered the essence of Ayurveda, providing comprehensive health benefits. The global interest in Ayurveda has created opportunities for the hospital to improve and expand its services, making it a prominent destination for those seeking traditional and holistic healthcare solutions.

SPECIALITIES

PANCHAKARMA THERAPY

Panchakarma Therapy (penta fold purificatory measures) play a vital role in Ayurvedic therapies and as such, they occupy an important place in Ayurvedic system of Medicine. The classical Ayurveda Panchakarma therapy is the comprehensive method of internal purification of the body by:-

- VAMANA
- VIRECHANA
- VASTHI
- NASYA
- VAMANA

Recreation of Body

Vamana

Vamana is a therapeutic vomiting procedure aimed at expelling toxins and excess mucus from the body, particularly targeting the respiratory and digestive systems. It is primarily used to treat conditions caused by imbalances in the Kapha dosha, such as respiratory issues, chronic colds, and digestive problems. The process involves consuming a specific mixture of medicinal herbs that induce vomiting, thereby cleansing the stomach and clearing the accumulated toxins.

Virechana

Virechana is a controlled purgation therapy used to cleanse the body of toxins through the anal route. This procedure focuses on expelling the vitiated Pitta dosha,

which governs digestion and metabolism, thus purifying the lower half of the body. Patients are given herbal laxatives that induce bowel movements, helping to remove impurities and excess bile from the intestines. Virechana is particularly beneficial for treating conditions like skin disorders, chronic fevers, and digestive ailments, as it helps to restore the body's natural balance by eliminating toxins and promoting better digestive health.

Vasthi

Vasthi is a therapeutic enema treatment designed to remove toxins from the lower parts of the body, focusing on the Vata dosha. This therapy involves the administration of medicated oils (oleation) or herbal decoctions (non-oleation) through the rectum. Vasthi is effective in treating a variety of conditions related to Vata imbalances, such as arthritis, neurological disorders, and constipation. The procedure helps to lubricate and cleanse the colon, thereby promoting the elimination of toxins and improving the body's overall energy and vitality.

Nasya

Nasya is a purification technique that involves the administration of medicinal substances through the nasal passages. This treatment is used to cleanse the head region, including the sinuses, nasal cavity, and throat. Medicinal oils, powders, or herbal juices are introduced into the nostrils, which helps to clear accumulated toxins, improve breathing, and enhance mental clarity. Nasya is particularly beneficial for treating head-related conditions like sinusitis, migraines, and nasal congestion, as it helps to balance the Kapha dosha and promote respiratory health.

Rakthamoksham

Rakthamoksham is a bloodletting therapy used to purify the blood and treat disorders caused by impure blood. This procedure involves the removal of a small quantity of blood using various methods such as pricking with needles (Prachanam), using leeches (Jalookavacharanam), or employing suction devices like horns. Rakthamoksham is effective for conditions related to blood impurities, such as skin diseases, abscesses, and inflammatory conditions. By eliminating toxic blood, this therapy helps to restore the body's balance, reduce inflammation, and promote healing.

Dhara

Dhara involves the continuous pouring of a liquid, such as medicated oil, buttermilk, milk, or fermented whey, over the head or body. This uninterrupted flow is intended to calm the mind and body, providing relief from conditions like insomnia and rheumatic complaints.

Pizhichil

In Pizhichil, warm medicated oil is poured generously over the entire body while a gentle massage is performed. This treatment helps alleviate skin diseases and rheumatic conditions by combining the benefits of oil therapy and massage.

Navarakkizhi

Navarakkizhi is a treatment where small linen bags filled with medicated and cooked Navara rice are used to massage the body after applying medicated oils. This therapy is effective for managing rheumatic complaints and rejuvenating the body.

Takradhara

Takradhara involves the continuous pouring of medicated buttermilk on the head. This soothing treatment is used for managing sleeplessness, various skin conditions, and mental disorders, helping to cool and calm the mind.

Thalapothichil

Thalapothichil is a procedure where a specially prepared herbal paste is applied to the head in a particular manner. This treatment is primarily used for mental disorders, providing a cooling and calming effect on the mind.

Udhwarthanam

Udhwarthanam is a massage technique using medicated powders. This therapy aims to reduce body fat, improve skin complexion, and enhance the functional efficiency of vital organs by stimulating the skin and underlying tissues.

Navaratheppu

Navaratheppu involves applying medicated cooked Navara rice to the entire body or specific affected areas. This treatment is beneficial for rheumatic complaints and serves as a rejuvenation therapy, promoting overall wellness.

Snehanam

Snehanam, or oleation therapy, includes both internal and external application of medicated oils. Performed before Panchakarma treatments, it helps with rheumatic complaints, skin diseases, and mental disorders by lubricating and preparing the body for further detoxification.

Snehapanam

Snehapanam involves the intake of medicated ghee or oil over a specific period. This treatment is particularly useful for chronic diseases, helping to internally cleanse and nourish the body.

Abhyangam:

Abhyangam is the full-body application of medicated oil. This therapy relieves fatigue, enhances stamina, and promotes restful sleep, providing overall relaxation and rejuvenation to the body.

Palppuka

Palppuka is a sudation technique using medicated milk. This method is used to treat arthritic problems by applying the warm, medicated milk to soothe and relieve joint pain and stiffness.

Upanaham

Upanaham involves wrapping specific areas of the body with medicated pastes for a designated time. This treatment aims to reduce inflammation and alleviate pain in targeted regions.

Swedanam

Swedanam is a series of heat-based treatments designed to induce sweating. There are thirteen different methods, such as steam, hot beds, and heated stones, all used to prepare the body for Panchakarma by promoting detoxification and easing muscle tension.

Kizhi

Kizhi is a fomentation technique that uses warm boluses filled with herbal leaves, medicated powders, sand, or salt. The choice of bolus depends on the specific condition being treated, such as pain, stiffness, or inflammation.

Lepam

Lepam is the application of medicated pastes to various parts of the body. This therapy is used to treat skin diseases, reduce local pain, and alleviate swelling by directly applying herbal formulations to the affected areas.

Infrastructure of the Hospital

Executive Suite Rooms: These are typically designed for patients who require premium amenities and personalized care. Executive suite rooms often offer spacious layouts and additional comforts.

Suite Rooms: Similar to executive suite rooms but often slightly less luxurious, suite rooms provide a higher level of comfort and privacy compared to standard accommodations.

Deluxe Rooms: Deluxe rooms offer comfortable and well-equipped settings for patients. They provide a balance between affordability and enhanced amenities.

Single Rooms: These rooms cater to individual patients, offering privacy and personalized care in a comfortable setting.

General Wards: General wards are designed to accommodate multiple patients in a shared space. They provide essential facilities and medical care at a more economical cost.

Special Treatments

- **Back Pain, Knee Pain, Joint Pain:** These are commonly treated through specialized Panchakarma therapies such as Abhyanga (therapeutic oil massage), Janu Basti (knee therapy with medicated oils), and Kati Basti (lower back therapy).
- **Hemiplegia:** Treatment may involve specific Panchakarma procedures like Pizhichil (pouring of medicated oil) and Nasya (nasal administration of medication).
- **Headache:** Panchakarma treatments such as Shirodhara (continuous pouring of oil on the forehead) and Nasya are often used to alleviate headaches.
- **Numbness:** Treatments might include Pinda Sweda (herbal poultice massage) and Nasya, aimed at improving nerve function.
- **Spondylosis:** Panchakarma therapies like Greeva Basti (neck therapy with medicated oils) and Pinda Sweda are typically employed.
- **Obesity:** Specialized therapies like Udwarthana (herbal powder massage) and Virechana (therapeutic purgation) are used for weight management.
- **Menstrual Problems:** Tailored treatments such as Uttar Basti (uterine therapy) and herbal medications are utilized.
- **Thyroid, Fibroid:** Ayurvedic therapies including herbal medications and Panchakarma procedures like Basti (medicated enema) are commonly applied.
- **Breathing Difficulties:** Nasya, steam therapy, and specific herbal treatments are used to address respiratory issues.
- **Piles, Fistula:** Treatments may include Kshara Karma (alkaline cauterization), Sitz baths, and herbal remedies.
- **Learning Disabilities:** Ayurvedic therapies aimed at improving cognitive function, including specific herbal formulations and therapies to enhance mental clarity.

SWOT Analysis of Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurvedic Hospital

Strengths

➤ **Reputation and Expertise**

Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurveda Hospital has established a strong reputation for its expertise in Ayurvedic treatments, particularly Panchakarma. This reputation builds trust and confidence among patients, knowing they are receiving care from knowledgeable and skilled practitioners in the field of Ayurveda.

➤ **High-Quality Herbal Products**

The hospital ensures the quality and authenticity of its treatments by using its own Oushadhi herbal products. These products are trusted for their efficacy and safety, contributing to the overall satisfaction of patients who seek genuine and high-quality Ayurvedic remedies.

Weakness

➤ **Marketing and Outreach**

The hospital may face challenges in visibility and attracting new patients due to potential underinvestment in marketing efforts. Without strong marketing strategies, the hospital's services might remain unnoticed by a broader audience that could benefit from Ayurvedic treatments.

➤ **Facility Modernization**

The hospital might face challenges in keeping its facilities up-to-date with the latest advancements in Ayurvedic treatment methods and modern amenities. Patients today often expect state-of-the-art facilities, and any lag in modernization can affect their overall experience and satisfaction.

Opportunities

➤ **Digital Marketing**

Leveraging online platforms and social media can significantly enhance the hospital's reach. By engaging with a larger audience interested in alternative medicine, the hospital can attract new patients who are seeking natural and holistic treatment options.

➤ **Growing Interest in Ayurveda**

There is a global surge in interest towards natural and alternative medicine. Oushadhi panchakarma ayurveda hospital can leverage this trend to attract more patients who are seeking holistic and natural approaches to health and wellness.

Threats

➤ **Competition**

The hospital faces increasing competition from other Ayurvedic centers and modern medical hospitals that offer alternative therapies. This competition can impact patient acquisition and retention, requiring the hospital to differentiate itself through unique value propositions.

➤ **Perception Issues**

Misconceptions about the effectiveness of Ayurveda among some sections of the population can limit the growth of the patient base. Addressing these perception issues through education and evidence-based outcomes is crucial for expanding patient acceptance.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Parasuraman, zeithaml, and berry were among the researchers to study service quality in detail. In their influential work published in 1985, they introduced a model called servqual. This model identified five main factors that determine the quality of a service: reliability (performing the service correctly and consistently), assurance (the knowledge and courtesy of employees, and their ability to inspire trust), tangibles (the physical appearance of facilities, equipment, and staff), empathy (caring and individualized attention given to customers), and responsiveness (willingness to help customers promptly). The servqual model measured service quality by looking at the difference between customers' expectations of the service and their actual experience or perception of the service they received.

A Reexamination and Extension," is a seminal work that challenged the prevailing SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry.. The authors questioned the conceptual foundation of SERVQUAL, which measured service quality as the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions of performance. Cronin and Taylor(1992) argued that service quality should be evaluated based solely on the perceptions of performance, without considering expectations. They contended that customer expectations are constantly changing and can be influenced by various factors, making it challenging to accurately measure and incorporate them into a service quality assessment.

The study proposed an alternative service quality measurement model called SERVPERF (Service Performance). This model focuses exclusively on the customer's perception of the service performance, rather than the gap between expectations and performance. Cronin and Taylor posited that performance-based measures are more accurate predictors of overall service quality than the disconfirmation-based measures used in SERVQUAL.To test their hypothesis, the authors conducted empirical research in four service industries: banking, pest control, dry cleaning, and fast food. They compared the SERVQUAL and SERVPERF models' ability to predict overall service quality and customer satisfaction.The results demonstrated that SERVPERF outperformed SERVQUAL in predicting overall service quality and customer satisfaction across all four industries. The study found that perceived service quality

was a better predictor of customer satisfaction than the disconfirmation paradigm employed by SERVQUAL.

The study of Teas, R. K. (1993) focuses on evaluating the validity of the traditional "perceptions-minus-expectations" (P-E) service quality model and proposes alternative models to better understand consumers' perceptions of quality. It addresses conceptual and operational issues within the P-E model, particularly concerning expectations and revised expectations components. The study introduces an evaluated performance (EP) model and a normed quality (NQ) model as alternatives to the P-E framework.

Findings from the study suggest that the SERVQUAL expectations and revised expectations measures lack discriminant validity, potentially due to respondent misinterpretations. The EP model demonstrates greater concurrent and construct validity compared to the P-E and NQ frameworks. The study also highlights the importance of considering attribute importance, performance forecasts, and ideal points in measuring perceived quality accurately. Overall, the research emphasizes the need for more robust and nuanced models to capture consumers' perceptions of service quality effectively, moving beyond the limitations of the traditional P-E framework

Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L. L., & Parasuraman, A. (1996) highlighted that the nature of the quality-intentions link varied across different dimensions of behavioural intentions. This suggests that different aspects of service quality can have varying effects on customer behaviours, emphasizing the importance of understanding these nuances in managing customer relationships.

Moreover, the study provided insights for researchers and managers on how to improve service quality to enhance customer retention and satisfaction. By examining the impact of service quality on customers' responses and behavioural intentions, companies can make informed decisions on resource allocation and service initiatives to retain customers, encourage recommendations, increase customer spending, and mitigate negative word-of-mouth communications.

Ladhari's 2009 literature review examines two decades of research on SERVQUAL, a widely used model for assessing service quality. The review synthesizes findings from various studies to evaluate SERVQUAL's effectiveness and applicability across different industries. Key insights include the model's strengths in measuring service quality based on five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Ladhari discusses how SERVQUAL has been adapted and critiqued over the years, highlighting its impact on service management practices.

The review identifies common criticisms of SERVQUAL, such as its reliance on expectations and perceptions, which may not always align with consumer experiences. Despite these critiques, Ladhari acknowledges SERVQUAL's utility in providing a structured framework for assessing and improving service quality. Furthermore, the review explores advancements in service quality research beyond SERVQUAL, including alternative models and methodologies. It emphasizes the ongoing evolution of theories and practices in service quality assessment, pointing towards the need for continuous refinement and innovation in measuring customer satisfaction and loyalty.

According to Donabedian (1980), in the past few decades, healthcare providers and researchers have become increasingly interested in understanding and measuring patient satisfaction. Initially, patient satisfaction was viewed in a narrow sense, focusing primarily on how courteous and accommodating the healthcare facilities were to patients (Donabedian, 1980). This early perspective considered factors like the friendliness of staff, the comfort of waiting areas, and the availability of amenities as the key determinants of patient satisfaction. However, as more research was conducted in this area, it became evident that patient satisfaction is a much broader concept that encompasses the overall healthcare experience. Researchers realized that patients' perceptions of satisfaction are influenced by various aspects of their interactions with the healthcare system, beyond just the physical facilities and basic courtesy.

The expectancy-disconfirmation theory, proposed by Oliver (1980), has played a significant role in shaping our understanding of patient satisfaction. This theory suggests that a patient's level of satisfaction is determined by the comparison between their initial expectations and their actual perceived experience with the healthcare service. According to this model, patients form certain expectations about various

aspects of their healthcare experience, such as the quality of care, the behaviour of healthcare providers, the efficiency of processes, and the overall environment. These expectations are shaped by various factors, including personal experiences, word-of-mouth information, and marketing or promotional materials from the healthcare provider.

When patients receive the healthcare service, they evaluate their actual experience against their initial expectations. If the perceived experience meets or exceeds their expectations, it leads to a state of confirmation or positive disconfirmation, resulting in higher levels of satisfaction. Conversely, if the experience falls short of their expectations, it leads to a state of negative disconfirmation, causing dissatisfaction. The expectancy-disconfirmation theory highlights the importance of managing patient expectations and delivering healthcare services that meet or exceed those expectations. It suggests that healthcare providers should strive to understand patients' expectations and align their service delivery accordingly to enhance patient satisfaction.

As the healthcare industry gained prominence and significance, researchers recognized the importance of service quality in this sector and its potential impact on patient outcomes. While service quality models had been developed and applied in other service industries, there was a growing realization that the healthcare context required a tailored approach due to its unique characteristics and complexities. Reidenbach and sandifer-smallwood (1990) were among the first to explore the role of service quality in healthcare and its impact on patient satisfaction. Their study highlighted the importance of interpersonal aspects of care, such as empathy and communication, in shaping patient perceptions of service quality.

Through their research, reidenbach and sandifer-smallwood (1990) demonstrated that patients did not solely evaluate service quality based on the technical aspects of care, such as medical expertise or state-of-the-art equipment. Instead, patients placed significant value on the interpersonal interactions they experienced during their healthcare journey. Providers who exhibited empathy, actively listened to patients' concerns, and communicated effectively were more likely to be perceived as delivering high-quality care, even in instances where technical aspects were comparable.

In the 1990s, researchers began to explore the multidimensional nature of patient satisfaction. Sitzia and Wood (1997) conducted a comprehensive literature review and identified eight dimensions of patient satisfaction: art of care, technical quality of care, accessibility/convenience, finance, physical environment, availability, continuity of care, and efficacy/outcomes of care. By identifying these eight dimensions, Sitzia and Wood highlighted the complexity of patient satisfaction and the need for a holistic approach in measuring and improving it. Their work provided a comprehensive framework for healthcare organizations to assess patient satisfaction across various touchpoints and aspects of the healthcare experience.

Grogan, Conner, Norman, Willits, and Porter (2000) focused on creating and validating a comprehensive questionnaire designed to gauge patient satisfaction with general practitioner (GP) services. Through their research, they pinpointed critical areas requiring enhancement. These areas included the communication skills of GPs, their ability to empathize with patients, and the adequacy of the information provided during consultations.

The study underscored the importance of effective communication between doctors and patients, emphasizing that clear, compassionate, and informative interactions are crucial for patient satisfaction. Additionally, the researchers highlighted the significance of empathy, noting that patients feel more valued and understood when their GPs show genuine concern for their well-being. The provision of thorough and accessible information was also identified as essential, as it empowers patients to make informed decisions about their health.

Grogan et al. advocated for the regular use of such satisfaction questionnaires as a tool for ongoing assessment. By systematically collecting patient feedback, healthcare providers can identify specific areas needing improvement. This, in turn, allows for the implementation of targeted interventions aimed at enhancing the quality of care. The ultimate goal is to create a more positive and effective healthcare experience for patients by continually refining the services offered based on their feedback.

As healthcare started to focus more on providing patient-centered care, researcher jenkinson et al. (2002) realized that patient satisfaction should be evaluated from the patients' perspectives and experiences, rather than solely relying on what healthcare providers thought was important. In this study, jenkinson et al. surveyed over 5,000 patients in the UK to understand their experiences and satisfaction with various aspects of care, such as accessibility, communication, and involvement in decision-making. He found that patients often had different priorities and concerns compared to what healthcare providers assumed. Based on their findings, jenkinson et al. recommended the development of patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs), which directly ask patients about their experiences, preferences, and perceptions of care. By considering patients' voices, healthcare organizations could better understand what truly matters to patients and improve their services accordingly.

Bleich et al. (2009) investigated the correlation between patient experience and overall satisfaction with the healthcare system. Their study highlighted several key factors that significantly influence patient satisfaction. Among these factors, wait times were identified as crucial; shorter wait times tend to enhance patient contentment. Effective communication between healthcare providers and patients was another vital element. Clear, compassionate, and informative interactions help patients feel valued and understood, thereby improving their experience. The quality of healthcare facilities plays a significant role in shaping patient perceptions. Well-maintained, comfortable, and clean environments contribute positively to patient satisfaction. Bleich and colleagues suggested that by focusing on improving these aspects—minimizing wait times, fostering better communication, and ensuring high-quality facilities—healthcare systems can enhance the overall satisfaction of patients. The authors concluded that a targeted approach to improving specific elements of the patient experience could lead to broader satisfaction with the healthcare system. This involves not only addressing logistical issues but also prioritizing the interpersonal aspects of care, ensuring that patients feel respected and well-informed throughout their healthcare journey.

Patient satisfaction is a multifaceted concept influenced by numerous elements. According to Prakash (2010), effective communication, empathy, and respect from healthcare providers are crucial in shaping patient satisfaction. Patients particularly appreciate clear explanations regarding their medical condition, available treatment options, and associated risks. This clarity helps in building trust and comfort with the healthcare process.

Furthermore, Prakash's study underlined that the perceived competence of healthcare professionals plays a vital role in how patients assess their care. When patients feel confident in their providers' expertise, their satisfaction levels tend to increase. The quality of the healthcare facilities, including cleanliness and availability of necessary equipment, also impacts patient satisfaction. A well-maintained, welcoming hospital environment can enhance the overall patient experience.

Factors such as the efficiency of administrative procedures and the ease of access to services are significant. When these aspects are managed effectively, patients are more likely to feel valued and cared for, contributing to higher satisfaction levels. Overall, Prakash's research suggests that a holistic approach, addressing both interpersonal and environmental factors, is essential for improving patient satisfaction in healthcare setting

Batbaatar et al. (2017) investigated the various factors that influence patient satisfaction across different healthcare environments. They pinpointed several crucial determinants that play a significant role in shaping patients' experiences and perceptions. One of the primary factors is the quality of interpersonal relationships between patients and healthcare providers. Effective communication, empathy, and mutual respect are essential in building trust and ensuring patients feel understood and cared for.

The technical competence of healthcare staff is another critical determinant. Patients are more likely to be satisfied when they perceive the healthcare professionals as knowledgeable and skilled. This competence reassures patients that they are receiving high-quality care, thereby enhancing their overall satisfaction. Accessibility and convenience of healthcare services also significantly impact patient satisfaction. Easy access to care, reasonable wait times, and convenient service locations contribute to a positive patient experience. Additionally, the physical environment of healthcare facilities, including cleanliness, comfort, and overall ambiance, plays a substantial

role in shaping patients' perceptions. The review emphasizes the importance of tailoring healthcare services to meet individual patient needs and expectations. Personalized care that addresses specific patient concerns and preferences can significantly enhance satisfaction levels. Batbaatar et al.'s findings suggest that a comprehensive approach, considering both interpersonal and systemic factors, is essential for improving patient satisfaction in healthcare settings.

In the mid-1990s, researchers delved deeper into the connection between service quality and patient satisfaction in healthcare settings. Bowers et al. (1994) conducted a study specifically in a hospital environment, exploring how various dimensions of service quality impacted patients' satisfaction levels. Their findings highlighted that factors such as reliability, responsiveness, and empathy played a crucial role in shaping patients' overall satisfaction with the care they received. Patients who perceived high levels of reliability, prompt responsiveness, and empathetic care from healthcare providers were more likely to report higher satisfaction with their hospital experience. This study reinforced the importance of prioritizing these key service quality dimensions to enhance patient satisfaction in healthcare facilities.

Andaleeb (2001) conducted an insightful study on service quality perceptions and patient satisfaction within hospitals in a developing country, as published in *Social Science and Medicine*. The research explored how patients perceive the quality of services provided by hospitals and the subsequent impact on their overall satisfaction. The study identified several key factors that influence patient satisfaction in a hospital setting. These include the responsiveness of the hospital staff, the tangibility of hospital facilities, the assurance provided by the medical personnel, and the empathy shown by healthcare providers. Andaleeb found that in developing countries, these factors play a crucial role in shaping patients' perceptions of service quality.

The findings suggest that improving the quality of hospital services in these regions requires a multifaceted approach. Enhancements in infrastructure, staff training in patient care and communication, and the development of more patient-centered service protocols are essential. The study emphasized that by addressing these areas, hospitals can significantly improve patient satisfaction levels.

Chahal and Kumari(2012) analyzed service quality and its impact on performance in the public healthcare sector. Their research identified that key dimensions of service quality, such as reliability, responsiveness, and empathy, are critical for improving patient satisfaction and overall performance in public health institutions. The study suggests strategic focus areas for enhancing service quality in the public healthcare sector.

The study on impact of service quality on patient satisfaction in private hospitals in Iran Zarei, E., Daneshkohan, A., Pouragha, B., Marzban, S., & Arab, M. (2015). The study utilized a cross-sectional design, collecting data through structured questionnaires from patients admitted to private hospitals. The researchers focused on five key dimensions of service quality: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Their findings indicated that all five dimensions significantly influenced patient satisfaction, with reliability and assurance being the most critical factors. Tangibility, referring to the physical facilities and equipment, also played a substantial role. The study concluded that improving service quality in these areas could enhance overall patient satisfaction, leading to better patient retention and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. This research provides valuable insights for hospital administrators and policymakers aiming to improve healthcare quality in the private sector

The Role of Service Quality in Patient Satisfaction: An Empirical Study," published in the international journal of healthcare quality assurance presents empirical research aimed at understanding how service quality influences patient satisfaction. Smith's study (2020) employs quantitative methods to analyze data gathered from healthcare service users to explore the nuanced interactions between service quality dimensions and patient perceptions.

The empirical findings of Smith's research underscore several critical points. Firstly, the study identifies specific dimensions of service quality—such as reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibles (physical facilities), and assurance (staff competence)—that significantly impact patient satisfaction levels. Through statistical analysis, Smith demonstrates that improvements in these service quality dimensions lead to higher levels of patient satisfaction, highlighting the importance of each dimension in shaping patient experiences positively., Smith's study contributes to the

literature by emphasizing the need for healthcare providers to prioritize and enhance these service quality dimensions systematically. By doing so, healthcare organizations can not only meet but also exceed patient expectations, thereby fostering greater patient satisfaction and potentially improving health outcomes.

Smith's empirical study provides valuable insights into the intricate relationship between service quality and patient satisfaction, offering practical implications for healthcare managers and policymakers striving to enhance service delivery effectiveness in healthcare settings.

Michael Brown's 2021 article, "Evaluating the Relationship Between Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction in Hospitals," published in BMC healthcare services investigates the complex interplay between service quality and patient satisfaction specifically within hospital settings. Brown's research employs a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively analyze and assess how different aspects of service quality impact patient satisfaction levels.

The study highlights various dimensions of service quality, such as responsiveness of staff, reliability of services, assurance provided by healthcare professionals, and the overall physical environment of hospitals. Through both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with patients, Brown identifies key factors that significantly influence patient perceptions of service quality and subsequent satisfaction. Brown's findings indicate a strong correlation between higher perceived service quality and increased levels of patient satisfaction. The research underscores the importance of effective communication, empathy from healthcare providers, and timely delivery of services as critical elements in shaping positive patient experiences.

The study suggests practical implications for hospital administrators and policymakers, emphasizing the need for continuous improvement in service quality to enhance overall patient satisfaction and loyalty. By focusing on these dimensions, healthcare organizations can better meet patient expectations and potentially improve health outcomes through enhanced patient experiences.

In the study titled "Healthcare Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction: A Conceptual Framework" (Javed Ali, Ahmad Jusoh, Norhalimah Idris, Khalil Md Nor, 2024), the authors identified that traditional dimensions of SERVQUAL—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—are essential but insufficient for the healthcare context due to its complexity. Therefore, the authors proposed two additional dimensions: patient safety and medical professionalism. Patient safety involves measures to prevent errors and harm to patients, while medical professionalism includes ethical practices, communication skills, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

By incorporating these dimensions, the framework aims to provide a more accurate and holistic assessment of service quality in healthcare settings. This enhanced model allows healthcare providers to better understand and improve various aspects of their services, ultimately leading to higher patient satisfaction and better healthcare outcomes. The findings underscore the need for a multidimensional approach to evaluating healthcare services, ensuring that both clinical and non-clinical factors are considered in patient satisfaction assessments.

The study concludes that focusing on these comprehensive dimensions can help healthcare providers achieve higher patient satisfaction by addressing both the technical and interpersonal aspects of care delivery. This approach not only aligns with patients' expectations but also promotes a safer and more professional healthcare environment.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Service quality is a concept that has evolved over time, influenced by the growing importance of customer satisfaction in various industries, including healthcare. The idea of service quality emerged as businesses realized that delivering high-quality services could be a significant differentiator in competitive markets. In the early stages, service quality was not distinctly recognized. However, with the rise of service-oriented economies in the latter half of the 20th century, scholars and practitioners began to focus more explicitly on what constitutes quality in service delivery.

Service quality is particularly crucial in healthcare because it has a direct impact on patient outcomes and overall well-being. High-quality healthcare services are essential for the effective treatment of medical conditions, ensuring that patients receive accurate diagnoses, appropriate treatments, and comprehensive follow-up care. Moreover, the quality of service extends beyond clinical effectiveness to encompass the patient's entire experience during their care journey. This includes factors such as timely access to care, clear communication with healthcare providers, and a compassionate, supportive environment. When these elements are addressed, patients are more likely to feel satisfied, secure, and comfortable, which can contribute positively to their recovery and overall health. Therefore, maintaining high standards of service quality is vital for both achieving optimal health outcomes and ensuring patient satisfaction.

Service Quality Models

Servqual Model – Five Rater Dimensions of Service Quality

Service quality in healthcare is a critical factor that influences patient satisfaction, trust, and overall healthcare outcomes. To understand how service quality is conceptualized and measured in healthcare, it's important to delve into the dimensions of service quality, which provide a framework for evaluating the various aspects of healthcare delivery. These dimensions were first comprehensively outlined by A. Parasuraman, Valarie Zeithaml, and Leonard Berry in their seminal work on the SERVQUAL model.

Origins of Service Quality Dimensions

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in the late 1980s, was initially designed to measure service quality across various service industries. It identifies gaps between customer expectations and perceptions of service, which are crucial for understanding and improving service quality. It identifies five key dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. Over time, these dimensions have been adapted and expanded upon to fit the specific context of healthcare settings.

SERVPERF

Conceptual Foundations of SERVPERF

The SERVPERF model, conceived by Joseph Cronin and Steven Taylor in 1992, presents a unique methodology for assessing service quality, emphasizing the importance of performance perceptions exclusively. This model was developed in response to some of the criticisms aimed at the SERVQUAL model, which measures service quality by identifying the gap between customer expectations and their perceptions of the actual service received. While SERVQUAL relies on the premise that the difference between expectations and perceptions is critical to understanding service quality, SERVPERF asserts that evaluating service quality based solely on the actual performance of the service is more direct and efficient. This approach simplifies the measurement process significantly and has proven effective across a wide range of industries.. The SERVPERF model addresses these challenges by eliminating the need to measure expectations and focusing solely on customer perceptions of performance .By concentrating on performance perceptions, SERVPERF simplifies the data collection process, making it easier for respondents to provide accurate and reliable feedback. This streamlined approach not only reduces the cognitive load on respondents but also enhances the clarity and reliability of the data collected. The simplicity of the SERVPERF model allows organizations to implement it more easily and interpret the results more straightforwardly, facilitating quicker and more effective decision-making.SERVPERF typically uses the same five dimensions of service quality as SERVQUAL—Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance but focuses solely on performance measures within these dimensions. This approach simplifies the measurement process significantly and has proven effective across a wide range of industries.

SERVICE QUALITY

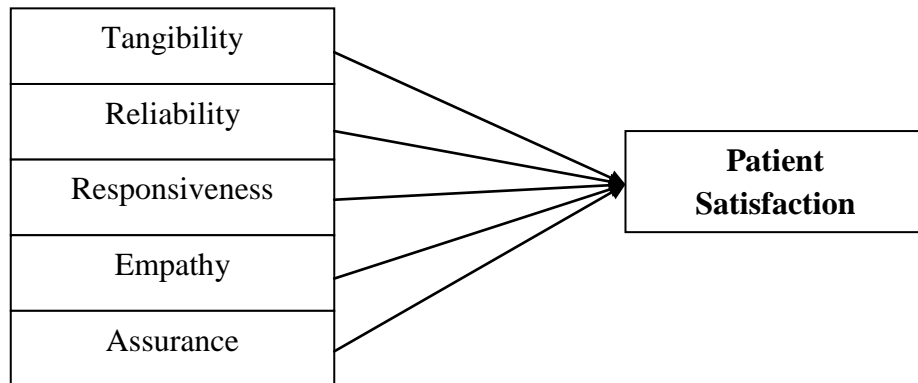


Figure 2.2:1: Conceptual Model for the Study

Tangibility

Tangibility refers to the physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel involved in the delivery of healthcare services. This dimension includes the cleanliness and modernity of hospital facilities, the state of medical equipment, the professional appearance of healthcare staff, and the physical comfort provided to patients. For instance, a well-maintained hospital environment and the latest medical technology can enhance patient perceptions of care quality. In other words Tangibility refers to the physical aspects of healthcare services that patients can see and touch, which significantly impact their perceptions of service quality. This dimension includes the condition and cleanliness of hospital facilities, the state of medical equipment, and the appearance of healthcare staff. Tangibility is crucial because it forms the first impression patients have when they enter a healthcare facility, influencing their overall experience and satisfaction.

In the healthcare setting, tangibility encompasses several key elements. First, the cleanliness and maintenance of hospital facilities are paramount. Patients expect a hygienic environment that is free from clutter and well-maintained. Cleanliness is not only a basic expectation but also a critical component directly affecting patient safety and comfort.

Secondly, the state of medical equipment is a tangible indicator of a healthcare facility's capability to provide high-quality care. Modern, well-functioning equipment reassures patients that they are receiving the best possible care using the latest technology. This includes diagnostic machines, surgical instruments, and other medical devices. Outdated or poorly maintained equipment can erode patient confidence and raise concerns about the effectiveness of the treatment they receive.

Additionally, the appearance and behaviour of healthcare staff contribute significantly to tangibility. Patients expect healthcare professionals to present themselves in a clean, professional manner, wearing appropriate uniforms or attire that reflects their role. This not only instills confidence but also enhances the perceived credibility and professionalism of the staff.

Physical comfort provided to patients, such as comfortable seating in waiting areas, well-designed patient rooms, and adequate amenities, plays a vital role in shaping their overall experience. Attention to these details can make a significant difference in how patients perceive the quality of care. Tangibility in healthcare is about creating a physical environment that conveys professionalism, competence, and care.

Reliability

Reliability is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Reliability translates to consistent, accurate diagnosis and treatment, timely delivery of healthcare services, and the dependability of healthcare providers in managing patient needs. Ensuring that medical tests are conducted accurately and that results are communicated promptly and correctly are crucial aspects of reliability. Reliability is the consistent ability to deliver promised services accurately and dependably. It is a fundamental aspect of service quality, as patients rely heavily on healthcare providers to manage their health effectively. Reliability encompasses several critical components, including accurate diagnoses, consistent treatment protocols, timely service delivery, and dependable communication of medical results.

Accurate diagnosis is the cornerstone of reliable healthcare. Patients expect healthcare providers to correctly identify their medical conditions through precise evaluation and diagnostic testing. Misdiagnosis can lead to ineffective treatments, prolonged illness, and even life-threatening situations. Therefore, the reliability of diagnostic processes, including the use of up-to-date medical knowledge and technology, is essential.

Healthcare professionals must continually update their skills and knowledge to maintain high diagnostic accuracy.

Consistent treatment protocols are another vital aspect of reliability. Once a diagnosis is made, it is crucial that the treatment provided follows established medical guidelines and is administered uniformly across different cases and providers. This consistency ensures that all patients receive the same high standard of care, reducing the risk of errors and variations in treatment outcomes. Reliable healthcare systems implement evidence-based practices and regularly review and update treatment protocols to reflect the latest medical advancements.

Timely delivery of healthcare services is also a key component of reliability. Patients depend on healthcare providers to deliver care promptly, whether it's for routine check-ups, urgent medical issues, or ongoing treatments. Delays in care may worsen medical conditions and decrease patient trust. Reliable healthcare services minimize waiting times and ensure that patients receive the necessary care without unnecessary delays. Efficient scheduling, adequate staffing, and streamlined processes contribute to timely service delivery.

The dependability of healthcare providers in managing patient needs encompasses not only clinical care but also effective communication and follow-up. This includes ensuring that medical tests are conducted accurately, results are communicated promptly, and any necessary follow-up actions are taken without delay. Patients must be kept informed about their health status and treatment plans, with healthcare providers readily available to answer questions and address concerns. This transparent and responsive communication builds patient trust and confidence in the reliability of the healthcare system.

Reliability in healthcare is multifaceted, encompassing accurate diagnosis, consistent treatment protocols, timely service delivery, and dependable communication. It is a critical determinant of patient satisfaction and trust, directly influencing health outcomes. Healthcare providers must continually strive to improve reliability through ongoing education, adherence to evidence-based practices, efficient processes, and transparent communication. By doing so, they can ensure that patients receive dependable, high-quality care that meets their needs and expectations.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. This dimension is critical in healthcare as it involves the speed and efficiency with which healthcare providers respond to patient needs, including emergencies, queries, and follow-up care. Quick response times, availability of urgent care, and efficient handling of patient admissions and discharges are indicative of high responsiveness. Responsiveness is the willingness and ability of healthcare providers to help patients and provide prompt service. This dimension is crucial because it directly impacts patient satisfaction and outcomes. When healthcare providers are responsive, they address patient needs swiftly and efficiently, which is essential for effective care delivery.

Responsiveness is the speed at which healthcare providers respond to patient needs, especially in emergencies. Quick response times can be life-saving, ensuring that patients receive timely interventions when they are most needed. This involves having systems in place to manage emergencies effectively, such as well-trained emergency staff, readily available medical supplies, and streamlined processes for rapid response. Another important element of responsiveness is the efficiency in handling patient queries and concerns. Patients often have questions about their health, treatment options, and care plans. Responsive healthcare providers ensure that these questions are answered promptly and clearly, helping patients feel informed and reassured about their care. This involves not only medical staff but also administrative personnel who manage appointments, billing, and other patient services.

Follow-up care is another critical component of responsiveness. After initial treatment, patients need ongoing support to manage their health conditions, recover from procedures, or adjust to new medications. Responsive healthcare systems have mechanisms in place for regular follow-ups, timely reminders for appointments, and easy access to medical advice when needed. This continuous engagement helps in monitoring patient progress and addressing any issues that may arise during recovery. The availability of urgent care services is also indicative of high responsiveness. Healthcare facilities that offer 24/7 urgent care ensure that patients have access to medical attention whenever necessary. Efficient handling of patient admissions and discharges further enhances responsiveness, reducing wait times and ensuring a smooth transition through different stages of care.

Responsiveness in healthcare is about being prompt, efficient, and proactive in addressing patient needs. It involves quick response times, effective communication, continuous follow-up care, and the availability of urgent care services. By being responsive, healthcare providers can significantly improve patient experiences and outcomes, fostering trust and satisfaction in the care they deliver.

Empathy

Empathy is the provision of caring, individualized attention to customers. Empathy is particularly important in healthcare, as it relates to the compassionate and personalized care provided to patients. It includes understanding patient concerns, providing emotional support, and ensuring that care is tailored to individual patient needs. Empathetic interactions can significantly enhance patient satisfaction and outcomes. Empathy in healthcare is about delivering compassionate, personalized care that recognizes and responds to the unique needs of each patient. This approach is vital because it builds trust, eases anxiety, and promotes better health outcomes.

Understanding patient concerns is a fundamental aspect of empathy. Healthcare providers must listen actively to patients, acknowledging their worries, fears, and personal circumstances. This means paying attention not only to the symptoms presented but also to the emotional and psychological challenges that patients might be facing. By understanding these concerns, providers can offer more comprehensive and effective care.

Providing emotional support is another crucial component of empathetic healthcare. Patients often experience stress and uncertainty about their health conditions and treatments. Healthcare professionals who show empathy offer reassurance and comfort, helping patients feel more secure and supported. Simple acts such as listening attentively, speaking kindly, and offering a comforting presence can make a significant difference in a patient's experience.

Tailoring care to meet individual patient needs is essential for demonstrating empathy. Each patient comes with a unique set of circumstances, medical histories, and preferences. Empathetic healthcare providers take these factors into account when developing treatment plans, ensuring that care is personalized and respectful of each patient's situation. This individualized care approach helps patients feel valued and understood, which can enhance their cooperation and adherence to treatment plans.

Empathetic interactions can greatly enhance patient satisfaction. When patients feel genuinely cared for, they are more likely to trust their healthcare providers, follow medical advice, and engage in their treatment plans. This trust and cooperation can lead to better health outcomes, as patients are more inclined to adhere to recommended treatments and make positive lifestyle changes.

Empathy in healthcare is about providing individualized, compassionate care that addresses both the emotional and physical needs of patients. By understanding patient concerns, offering emotional support, and tailoring care to individual needs, healthcare providers can significantly improve patient satisfaction and health outcomes, fostering a more positive healthcare experience.

Assurance

Assurance involves the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. Assurance in healthcare is conveyed through the competence of healthcare professionals, their ability to communicate effectively with patients, and the overall trustworthiness of the healthcare institution. Patients need to feel confident in the skills and expertise of their doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers.

The competence of healthcare professionals is a key aspect of assurance. Patients need to trust that their doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers possess the necessary skills and expertise to diagnose and treat their conditions effectively. This confidence is built through consistent, high-quality care, ongoing professional development, and adherence to best practices in medicine. When healthcare professionals demonstrate a thorough understanding of medical procedures and provide accurate, evidence-based information, patients are more likely to feel assured of the care they receive.

Effective communication is another vital component of assurance. Healthcare providers must be able to explain medical conditions, treatment options, and care plans clearly and compassionately. This involves not only providing detailed information but also listening to patients' concerns and answering their questions thoroughly. Good communication helps patients understand their health situation, reduces anxiety, and fosters a sense of collaboration in their care journey. Clear and timely communication of information is vital in healthcare. This includes explaining diagnoses, treatment options, procedures, and potential risks in a manner that patients

can comprehend. Providing accurate information helps patients make informed decisions about their care. Timely updates about test results, changes in treatment plans, and follow-up care are also crucial in managing patient expectations and reducing anxiety. Healthcare providers must actively listen to patients to understand their symptoms, concerns, and preferences. This involves not only hearing the words but also interpreting non-verbal cues. Active listening helps in accurately diagnosing conditions and tailoring treatment plans to individual needs. It also makes patients feel valued and understood. Medical jargon and complex terminology can be confusing for patients. Healthcare providers should use plain language and confirm understanding through techniques like "teach-back," where patients repeat the information in their own words. Visual aids and written materials can also enhance understanding.

Miscommunication can lead to medical errors, adverse events, and compromised patient safety. Effective communication among healthcare teams, and between providers and patients, ensures that everyone involved is aware of the care plan and any changes. This coordination reduces the risk of errors and enhances the safety and quality of care.

Courtesy and professionalism also play significant roles in assurance. Healthcare providers should consistently demonstrate respect, empathy, and a caring attitude towards patients. Simple gestures such as greeting patients warmly, maintaining eye contact, and showing genuine concern for their well-being can significantly enhance a patient's confidence in their care.

Moreover, the trustworthiness of the healthcare institution contributes to assurance. This includes the facility's reputation, accreditation status, and adherence to safety and ethical standards. A well-respected institution known for its quality of care and patient safety protocols can greatly boost patient confidence. Transparency in healthcare practices, such as openly discussing potential risks and outcomes, also reinforces trust.

Assurance in healthcare is about ensuring patients feel confident in the abilities and integrity of their healthcare providers. By demonstrating competence, effective communication, professionalism, and trustworthiness, healthcare professionals can inspire a strong sense of assurance in their patients. This, in turn, leads to better patient satisfaction, adherence to treatment plans, and overall health outcomes.

Donabedian Model

The Donabedian model is a conceptual framework for investigating health services and assessing healthcare quality. The approach classifies information about quality of treatment into three categories: "structure," "process," and "outcomes." Structure refers to the setting in which care is provided, which includes hospital facilities, staff, financing, and equipment. The term "process" refers to the transactions that occur between patients and providers over the course of healthcare delivery. Finally, outcomes refer to how healthcare affects the health of individuals and populations. Avedis Donabedian, a physician and health services researcher at the University of Michigan, created the first model in 1966.

The model typically consists of three interconnected elements: structure, process, and outcome arranged in a sequential chain. These components signify the different types of data collected to assess the quality of care within a system.

Structure

Structure encompasses the foundational elements that shape the environment in which healthcare is provided. It encompasses physical infrastructure, equipment availability, and human resources such as staffing levels and qualifications. Additionally, organizational aspects like training protocols and payment systems for staff also fall under structure. These components collectively influence how healthcare providers and patients interact within a healthcare system.

The significance of structure lies in its role as a determinant of the overall quality of care delivered within a facility or system. It provides the framework within which healthcare processes occur, exerting a profound influence on the outcomes achieved. For instance, a well-equipped hospital with sufficient medical supplies and skilled personnel tends to support effective diagnosis and treatment, thereby enhancing patient outcomes.

One of the distinguishing features of structure is its relative ease of observation and measurement compared to other dimensions of healthcare quality. Physical aspects like facility cleanliness, availability of technology, and adequacy of staffing can be objectively assessed. This tangible nature of structural elements makes them pivotal in understanding and improving healthcare delivery.

Moreover, structure is often viewed as the upstream factor influencing processes within healthcare systems. Deficiencies or strengths in structural elements can directly impact how care processes unfold. For example, inadequate staffing levels can lead to delays in patient care, affecting treatment timelines and patient satisfaction.

In essence, while structure represents the tangible and observable components of healthcare settings, its influence extends beyond mere physical attributes. It shapes the operational context within which healthcare processes occur, making it a crucial determinant of overall care quality and patient outcomes. Therefore, attention to structural elements is essential in efforts to enhance healthcare delivery and address systemic challenges effectively.

Process

Process in healthcare encompasses the entirety of actions involved in delivering medical care. These actions typically include diagnostic procedures, treatment interventions, preventive measures, and patient education. Additionally, processes can extend to actions taken by patients or their families in managing health conditions. They are broadly categorized into technical processes, which detail how care is administered, and interpersonal processes, which define the manner in which care is provided.

According to Donabedian, a prominent healthcare quality theorist, the assessment of process is closely synonymous with assessing the quality of care itself. This is because process encapsulates every aspect of healthcare delivery, from clinical procedures to the communication and interaction between healthcare providers and patients.

Information regarding processes can be gleaned from various sources such as medical records, patient and practitioner interviews, and direct observations of healthcare encounters. These sources provide insights into how healthcare services are delivered, the adherence to clinical guidelines, and the effectiveness of patient-provider interactions.

Understanding and improving processes is critical in enhancing overall healthcare quality and patient outcomes. Effective processes ensure that healthcare interventions are delivered in a timely, safe, and patient-centered manner. For instance, streamlined diagnostic processes can lead to quicker diagnosis and treatment initiation, thereby improving patient satisfaction and clinical outcomes.

By focusing on both technical and interpersonal processes, healthcare organizations can strive to optimize efficiency, minimize errors, and promote continuity of care. Continuous evaluation and refinement of processes based on reliable data and feedback are essential for achieving sustainable improvements in healthcare delivery. process in healthcare represents the comprehensive array of activities involved in delivering care, encompassing clinical procedures, patient interactions, and adherence to best practices. It serves as a cornerstone in assessing and enhancing the quality of care provided across healthcare settings.

Outcome

Outcome in healthcare refers to the comprehensive effects of medical interventions on patients or populations. This includes changes in health status, behaviours, knowledge, as well as measures like patient satisfaction and health-related quality of life. Ultimately, improving patient health is the primary goal of healthcare, making outcomes a crucial indicator of care quality. However, accurately measuring outcomes solely attributable to healthcare can be challenging. It often requires large sample sizes, adjustments for varying patient conditions and long-term follow-ups because outcomes may take time to manifest.

The Donabedian Model, originally devised for assessing clinical care quality, remains widely used across healthcare fields. It consists of three interconnected domains: structure, process, and outcome. Unlike defining quality explicitly, the model offers a flexible framework applicable to diverse healthcare issues—from specific clinical practices to broader health system evaluations.

Each domain—structure, process, and outcome—has its strengths and limitations. Researchers often link these domains to establish a conceptual chain of causation. This approach helps in understanding healthcare systems better and in designing effective experiments and interventions.

For instance, improving healthcare processes (such as diagnostic accuracy or treatment protocols) ideally leads to better outcomes (like improved health status or higher patient satisfaction). Connecting these dots requires systematic research and analysis to identify effective strategies for enhancing overall healthcare quality. outcomes in healthcare encompass the tangible results of medical care on patients and populations. They are pivotal in assessing the success of healthcare interventions and in guiding efforts to improve patient health and well-being. The Donabedian Model

provides a flexible framework to evaluate and enhance healthcare quality by exploring the relationships between structure, process, and outcome in various healthcare contexts.

Outcome

Outcomes in healthcare encompass a wide range of effects on patients or populations, encapsulating changes in health status, behaviours, knowledge, as well as considerations like patient satisfaction and health-related quality of life. These outcomes are viewed as pivotal indicators of healthcare quality because the fundamental aim of healthcare is to enhance patient health. However, accurately measuring outcomes solely attributable to healthcare interventions poses significant challenges.

Establishing clear connections between healthcare processes and outcomes often necessitates substantial sample sizes, adjustments for differences in patient characteristics (case mix), and extended periods of observation to capture outcomes that may emerge over time. The complexity arises from the diverse factors influencing health outcomes beyond direct medical interventions, such as socioeconomic status, environmental factors, and individual behaviours. These variables can confound efforts to attribute changes in health solely to healthcare interventions.

Moreover, measuring outcomes accurately requires a nuanced approach that considers both short-term impacts and long-term effects, which may only manifest after a considerable period. For instance, the effectiveness of a preventive health program might not be fully evident until years later when disease incidence decreases.

Patient satisfaction and health-related quality of life are integral components of healthcare outcomes, reflecting the holistic impact of care beyond clinical metrics. Patient-reported outcomes provide valuable insights into how individuals perceive their health and well-being in the context of healthcare interventions. While outcomes represent the ultimate goals of healthcare efforts, achieving a comprehensive understanding and measurement of these outcomes requires overcoming methodological challenges. These include addressing confounding variables, ensuring adequate follow-up periods, and utilizing robust statistical methods to distinguish the impacts of healthcare interventions from other influencing factors. By continually refining measurement techniques and embracing comprehensive approaches,

healthcare systems can strive towards improving patient outcomes effectively and responsibly.

The Quality Caring Model

The Quality Caring Model, developed by Joanne Duffy, is a conceptual framework that underscores the significance of caring in healthcare. The model emphasizes the interconnection between caring relationships and quality healthcare outcomes. By focusing on caring relationships, healthcare providers can enhance patient experiences, promote healing, and ensure better overall health outcomes. This comprehensive exploration delves into the principles, components, and applications of the Quality Caring Model in healthcare settings.

Mutual Problem Solving

Mutual Problem Solving involves healthcare providers working collaboratively with patients to address their health issues. This behaviour encourages patients to actively participate in their care by sharing their concerns, preferences, and insights. It emphasizes the importance of open communication and shared decision-making, where both the patient and provider contribute to identifying problems and developing solutions. This collaborative approach not only empowers patients but also ensures that care plans are tailored to their unique needs and circumstances.

Attentive Reassurance

Attentive Reassurance focuses on being fully present and attentive to patients. Healthcare providers demonstrate this behaviour by listening actively, providing consistent and clear information, and offering emotional support. This reassurance helps patients feel understood, valued, and confident in their care. By being present in the moment, providers can better assess and respond to the emotional and psychological needs of patients, thereby enhancing their overall well-being.

Human Respect

Human Respect is about valuing every individual through unconditional acceptance and treating them with dignity. This behaviour involves recognizing and honoring the intrinsic worth of each person, regardless of their background, beliefs, or health status. Healthcare providers show respect by listening without judgment, maintaining

confidentiality, and advocating for the patient's rights and preferences. By doing so, they create a trusting and respectful relationship that fosters a positive care experience.

Encouraging Manner

An Encouraging Manner involves communicating in a supportive and positive way. Healthcare providers who exhibit this behaviour use encouraging words, maintain a positive tone, and show openness to the feelings and experiences of others. This approach helps to build a supportive environment where patients feel motivated and hopeful about their care and recovery. It also promotes a sense of empowerment and self-efficacy, encouraging patients to engage actively in their health journey.

Appreciation of Unique Meanings

Appreciation of Unique Meanings involves recognizing and valuing the individuality of each patient. Healthcare providers acknowledge that every person is shaped by their unique life experiences, cultural background, and personal beliefs. This behaviour requires providers to be culturally competent and sensitive to the diverse perspectives and needs of patients. By understanding and appreciating these unique meanings, providers can offer personalized care that resonates with the patient's identity and values.

Healing Environment

Creating a Healing Environment means providing care in a setting that promotes patient privacy, safety, and control. Healthcare providers ensure that the physical environment is conducive to healing by maintaining cleanliness, reducing noise, and ensuring comfort. They also respect the patient's need for privacy and autonomy, allowing them to feel safe and in control of their care. A healing environment supports the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of patients, facilitating a more effective recovery process.

Basic Human Needs

Recognizing and addressing Basic Human Needs is fundamental to the Quality Caring Model. This behaviour involves understanding that all individuals have physiological, safety, love/belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs. Healthcare providers

ensure that these needs are met by providing comprehensive care that includes physical health, emotional support, and opportunities for social connection. By addressing these basic needs, providers help patients achieve a sense of well-being and fulfillment.

Affiliation Needs

Affiliation Needs refer to the importance of involving family members, caregivers, and others in the care process. This behaviour acknowledges that social support is critical to the patient's overall health and recovery. Healthcare providers engage with the patient's support network, recognizing their contributions and ensuring they feel included and valued. This collaborative approach strengthens the patient's support system, providing additional resources and emotional support.

Grönroos's Model

Christian Grönroos's model of service quality is a comprehensive framework that differentiates between two critical aspects of service: technical quality and functional quality. Introduced in the mid-1980s, this model has profoundly influenced the understanding and assessment of service quality by emphasizing that both the outcome of the service (technical quality) and the manner in which the service is delivered (functional quality) are pivotal to customer satisfaction and overall service quality.

The Grönroos model identifies two distinct dimensions of service quality:-

Technical Quality

This dimension refers to what the customer actually receives as a result of the service. It is the core outcome or the tangible component of the service. For instance, in a healthcare context, technical quality would pertain to the medical treatment and its effectiveness. In a restaurant, it might relate to the quality of the food served. Technical quality is often easier to measure objectively because it involves concrete results.

Functional Quality

This dimension focuses on how the service is delivered to the customer. It encompasses the interactions between the service provider and the customer, including aspects like the behaviour of staff, the accessibility of the service, the clarity of communication, and the overall service environment. Functional quality is more subjective and relies heavily on the perceptions of the customer regarding the service delivery process.

Importance of Both Dimensions

Grönroos emphasizes that both technical and functional quality are essential for achieving high service quality and customer satisfaction. A service that excels in technical quality but falls short in functional quality may fail to satisfy customers. Conversely, excellent functional quality cannot compensate for poor technical quality. Therefore, organizations need to manage both dimensions effectively to deliver superior service quality.

Gummesson Model

Evert Gummesson's model of service quality emphasizes the relational aspect, underlining the significance of interactions between customers and service providers. This model posits that the quality of these interactions plays a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction. Gummesson's approach includes key dimensions such as contact personnel, service systems, and outcomes, each of which contributes to the overall quality of service. By focusing on the relationships within the service delivery process, Gummesson's model provides a holistic view that stresses the importance of building and maintaining positive service relationships.

Key Dimensions of the Gummesson Model

Contact Personnel

This dimension highlights the role of employees who directly interact with customers. According to Gummesson, these front-line employees are pivotal in creating a positive service experience. Their behaviour, attitude, and competence significantly influence customer satisfaction. Effective communication, empathy, and problem-solving skills are critical attributes for contact personnel. Gummesson asserts that

well-trained and motivated staff can foster strong customer relationships, leading to increased loyalty and repeat business.

Service Systems

The service systems dimension focuses on the processes and infrastructures that support service delivery. This includes everything from the technology used to manage customer interactions to the organizational processes that ensure service consistency and reliability. Efficient service systems are essential for enabling contact personnel to perform their roles effectively. They provide the necessary tools and support to ensure that customer interactions are smooth and satisfactory. Gummesson emphasizes that robust service systems can enhance the overall service experience by reducing wait times, streamlining processes, and ensuring that customers receive accurate and timely information.

Outcomes

The outcomes dimension pertains to the results of the service encounter. This includes both the tangible and intangible benefits that customers receive from the service. While tangible outcomes might involve the actual product or service delivered, intangible outcomes encompass the emotional and psychological effects of the service experience. Gummesson notes that positive outcomes are not solely about delivering a product or service; they also involve meeting or exceeding customer expectations and ensuring that customers feel valued and understood.

Introduction to the Critical Incident Technique (CIT)

The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) is a qualitative research method that involves collecting specific instances of particularly good or poor service as reported by customers and employees. Developed by John Flanagan in the 1950s, this technique is designed to identify critical incidents that significantly impact customer perceptions. By focusing on these critical moments, CIT helps organizations understand key factors that influence customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This understanding can guide service recovery efforts and improvements in service quality.

Key Concepts of the Critical Incident Technique

Critical Incident

A critical incident in the context of CIT refers to any significant interaction or event between a service provider and a customer that substantially affects the customer's perception of the service. These incidents can be either positive or negative and provide valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of service delivery.

Data Collection

The primary data collection method in CIT involves soliciting detailed descriptions of critical incidents from customers and employees. This can be done through interviews, surveys, or focus groups. The goal is to gather rich, qualitative data that captures the specifics of each incident, including the context, actions taken, and outcomes.

Analysis

Once data is collected, it is systematically analyzed to identify common themes and patterns. This analysis helps in understanding the underlying factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful service encounters. The insights gained from this analysis can then be used to inform service improvement strategies.

Influence of Staff Training on Service Quality

Staff training plays a crucial role in enhancing service quality in healthcare settings. Well-trained staff members are essential for delivering high-quality care and ensuring patient satisfaction. Training equips healthcare workers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence to perform their duties effectively. When staff are adequately trained, they can provide better service, leading to improved patient outcomes and loyalty.

One of the primary benefits of staff training is the development of essential clinical skills. Healthcare professionals, including nurses, doctors, and support staff, must stay updated on the latest medical practices, technologies, and protocols. Regular training sessions help them learn about new treatments, procedures, and advancements in healthcare. This continuous education not only enhances their clinical abilities but also enables them to offer patients the best possible care. For example, training on the latest surgical techniques can directly impact patient safety and recovery times. In

addition to clinical skills, training also focuses on improving interpersonal skills, which are vital in healthcare. Staff members interact with patients daily, and effective communication is key to providing quality service. Training programs often include modules on communication skills, empathy, and patient engagement. When staff are trained to listen actively and respond compassionately to patient needs, it creates a more supportive and trusting environment. This positive interaction significantly influences patient satisfaction and loyalty, as patients feel valued and understood. Another important aspect of staff training is enhancing teamwork and collaboration among healthcare workers. In a healthcare setting, different professionals must work together to provide comprehensive care. Training programs that emphasize teamwork foster a collaborative culture, where staff members communicate openly and support each other in delivering high-quality service. This collaboration leads to better decision-making, streamlined processes, and ultimately, improved patient care.

Training also plays a significant role in reducing errors and enhancing patient safety. Inadequate training can lead to misunderstandings and mistakes that can have serious consequences for patients. By investing in thorough training programs, healthcare organizations can minimize these risks. Staff members who understand protocols, procedures, and safety measures are less likely to make errors. This focus on quality assurance not only protects patients but also enhances the overall reputation of the healthcare facility.

Moreover, the impact of staff training extends to employee satisfaction and retention. When healthcare organizations invest in their employees' development, staff feel valued and motivated. A well-trained workforce is more confident in their abilities, leading to increased job satisfaction. Satisfied employees are more likely to remain with the organization, reducing turnover rates and associated costs. Consistency in staffing also contributes to better service quality, as patients benefit from familiar faces and ongoing relationships with their caregivers.

Patient Rights and Service Quality

Patient rights are fundamental entitlements that every individual should expect when receiving healthcare services. These rights not only empower patients but also significantly influence the quality of care they receive. When healthcare providers prioritize patient rights, they create an environment conducive to high service quality,

ultimately leading to improved patient satisfaction and health outcomes. At the core of patient rights is the principle of autonomy, which allows patients to make informed decisions about their care. This includes the right to receive comprehensive information about their diagnosis, treatment options, and potential risks. When healthcare professionals respect this right, patients can actively participate in their care, leading to greater trust and satisfaction with the services provided. Informed patients are more likely to adhere to treatment plans and engage in their health journey, fostering a positive relationship with their providers.

Confidentiality is another crucial patient right that directly impacts service quality. Patients must feel confident that their personal health information is protected and handled with care. When healthcare providers uphold confidentiality, it builds trust and encourages open communication between patients and their caregivers. This trust is essential for effective care delivery, as patients are more likely to share pertinent information about their health conditions when they feel their privacy is respected.

The right to respectful and dignified treatment also plays a vital role in enhancing service quality. Patients expect to be treated with compassion and empathy throughout their healthcare experience. When staff members exhibit respect and understanding, it creates a positive atmosphere that significantly affects patient satisfaction. This respectful treatment can lead to better patient-provider relationships, ultimately improving the overall quality of care.

The promotion of patient rights aligns with ethical standards and regulations within the healthcare industry. Compliance with these standards is crucial for maintaining accreditation and ensuring the delivery of high-quality care. By prioritizing patient rights, healthcare organizations can foster a culture of excellence that resonates throughout all levels of service.

Patient rights are integral to achieving high service quality in healthcare settings. By respecting autonomy, maintaining confidentiality, ensuring respectful treatment, and facilitating timely care, healthcare providers can significantly enhance patient satisfaction and outcomes. A strong commitment to patient rights not only empowers individuals but also strengthens the overall healthcare system, fostering trust and collaboration between patients and providers. This commitment ultimately leads to a higher standard of care that benefits everyone involved.

Barriers to Service Quality in Healthcare Settings

Service quality in healthcare is essential for ensuring patient satisfaction and positive health outcomes, yet various barriers can impede the delivery of high-quality care. One significant barrier is insufficient staffing levels, which can lead to increased workloads for healthcare professionals. When staff are stretched thin, they may struggle to provide attentive and personalized care, resulting in diminished service quality. High patient-to-provider ratios can also result in rushed interactions, leading to a lack of meaningful communication and understanding of patient needs. Another critical barrier is inadequate training and professional development opportunities for staff. Without ongoing education and training, healthcare workers may not be equipped with the latest knowledge and skills required to deliver optimal care, affecting their ability to respond effectively to patient needs and evolving healthcare practices.

Communication breakdowns within healthcare teams can further complicate service quality. Poor communication among staff can result in fragmented care, misunderstandings, and errors in treatment. Effective teamwork is vital for ensuring that patients receive coordinated and comprehensive care; however, when communication is lacking, it can lead to significant gaps in service quality. Additionally, external factors, such as bureaucratic regulations and administrative burdens, can hinder the ability of healthcare providers to focus on patient care. Complex regulatory requirements often consume valuable time and resources, diverting attention from direct patient interactions and care quality.

Patient-related factors also serve as barriers to service quality. For instance, varying levels of health literacy among patients can impact their understanding of treatment plans and medical advice. Patients with low health literacy may struggle to follow instructions, leading to poor adherence to treatments and ultimately affecting their health outcomes. Furthermore, cultural differences can create barriers in communication and understanding between patients and providers. When healthcare professionals are not culturally competent, they may unintentionally alienate patients, resulting in dissatisfaction and decreased service quality.

Technological challenges can also impede service quality in healthcare settings. While advancements in technology have the potential to enhance care delivery, inadequate training on new systems can lead to inefficiencies and errors. Staff may find it challenging to adapt to new electronic health record systems or telemedicine

platforms without proper training and support. This can create frustration and impact the quality of interactions with patients.

Another significant barrier is the physical environment of healthcare facilities. Overcrowded waiting areas, insufficient privacy, and inadequate resources can negatively influence the patient experience. A poorly designed environment can lead to discomfort and stress for patients, which affects their overall perception of service quality. Lastly, financial constraints and limitations in resources can severely restrict the ability of healthcare organizations to invest in quality improvement initiatives, staff training, and adequate infrastructure. When funding is limited, organizations may struggle to maintain high standards of care, further exacerbating barriers to service quality.

Ethics and Service Quality in Healthcare

Ethics play a fundamental role in shaping service quality within the healthcare industry. The ethical principles guiding healthcare professionals significantly influence their interactions with patients, the quality of care provided, and the overall healthcare environment. Upholding ethical standards not only fosters trust and respect between patients and providers but also enhances service quality by ensuring that patient needs are prioritized.

One of the core ethical principles in healthcare is respect for patient autonomy. This principle emphasizes the importance of allowing patients to make informed decisions about their care. When healthcare providers respect patient autonomy, they engage patients in discussions about treatment options, risks, and benefits, empowering them to make choices that align with their values and preferences. This collaborative approach not only improves patient satisfaction but also leads to better adherence to treatment plans, thereby enhancing overall service quality.

Another critical ethical principle is beneficence, which focuses on promoting the well-being of patients. Healthcare providers are ethically obligated to act in the best interest of their patients, ensuring that their actions contribute positively to patient health outcomes. This commitment to beneficence drives providers to deliver high-quality care, prioritize patient safety, and advocate for effective treatments. When healthcare professionals prioritize the well-being of their patients, it reflects directly on the quality of services offered.

Non-maleficence, or the obligation to avoid harm, is equally important in the context of service quality. Healthcare providers must be vigilant in identifying potential risks associated with treatments or procedures and take steps to mitigate those risks. This ethical commitment ensures that patients receive safe and effective care, which is fundamental to maintaining high service quality. For example, thorough training and adherence to protocols can prevent medical errors, thereby protecting patient safety and enhancing trust in the healthcare system.

Justice is another ethical principle that is crucial to service quality. This principle advocates for fair and equitable treatment of all patients, regardless of their background, socioeconomic status, or other factors. Ensuring that all patients have access to high-quality care not only upholds ethical standards but also enhances the overall quality of services. When healthcare systems promote equity, they foster an inclusive environment that respects the dignity of every patient.

Ethics also influence the organizational culture within healthcare institutions. A strong ethical framework encourages a culture of accountability, transparency, and integrity among healthcare staff. When providers adhere to ethical standards, it creates a supportive environment where quality service is prioritized. Ethical dilemmas, if not addressed properly, can lead to subpar service delivery and erode patient trust. Therefore, ongoing ethics training and discussions are essential for maintaining high service quality.

Moreover, the integration of ethics in healthcare quality initiatives can lead to better patient outcomes. When ethical considerations are incorporated into quality improvement programs, healthcare organizations can ensure that their services align with the values and needs of their patients. This alignment fosters a commitment to continuous improvement and enhances the overall patient experience.

Ethics are intrinsically linked to service quality in healthcare. By upholding principles such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice, healthcare providers can deliver high-quality care that meets patient needs and expectations. An ethical approach not only strengthens patient-provider relationships but also fosters trust and satisfaction, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes and a more robust healthcare system. Prioritizing ethics within healthcare institutions is essential for creating an environment where service quality thrives.

Patient Satisfaction

Patient satisfaction is a crucial metric in healthcare, reflecting the quality of care provided and significantly influencing health outcomes. At its core, patient satisfaction encompasses the patient's overall experience, from initial contact to discharge, including the efficiency of service, the environment of the facility, the professionalism and empathy of the staff, and the effectiveness of communication. A positive patient experience often leads to better patient engagement, adherence to treatment plans, and overall health outcomes, making it a vital component of healthcare quality.

One of the primary factors affecting patient satisfaction is the quality of communication between healthcare providers and patients. Effective communication involves not only the clear and concise conveyance of medical information but also active listening and empathy. Patients need to feel heard and understood, which fosters trust and a sense of partnership in their care. When healthcare providers take the time to explain diagnoses, treatments, and procedures in an accessible manner, patients are more likely to feel valued and respected, leading to higher satisfaction levels.

The physical environment of healthcare facilities also plays a significant role in patient satisfaction. Cleanliness, comfort, and accessibility are key aspects that patients consider when evaluating their overall experience. A welcoming and well-maintained environment can reduce anxiety and enhance the overall perception of care quality. Moreover, ensuring that facilities are equipped with modern amenities and technologies can contribute to a more efficient and comfortable patient experience.

Timeliness and efficiency of service are additional critical components of patient satisfaction. Long wait times and delays in receiving care can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction. Healthcare providers must strive to streamline processes, reduce wait times, and ensure that patients receive timely and efficient care. This can be achieved through better scheduling practices, effective use of technology, and ensuring adequate staffing levels.

The professionalism and demeanor of healthcare staff are also fundamental to patient satisfaction. Patients expect to be treated with courtesy, respect, and compassion. Training healthcare professionals to develop strong interpersonal skills and fostering a culture of empathy and patient-centered care can significantly enhance patient

experiences. When patients feel that the staff genuinely cares about their well-being, it positively impacts their satisfaction and overall perception of the healthcare facility.

Patient satisfaction is not only important for the patients themselves but also for healthcare providers and institutions. High levels of patient satisfaction are often linked to better patient retention, positive word-of-mouth referrals, and improved financial performance for healthcare organizations. Additionally, patient feedback can provide valuable insights for continuous improvement in healthcare services. By actively seeking and addressing patient concerns and suggestions, healthcare providers can make targeted improvements that enhance the overall quality of care.

Patient satisfaction is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of the healthcare experience. Effective communication, a welcoming physical environment, timely and efficient service, and the professionalism of healthcare staff are all critical components that contribute to a positive patient experience. By prioritizing patient satisfaction, healthcare providers can improve health outcomes, foster patient loyalty, and enhance the overall quality of care. Continuous efforts to understand and meet patient needs and expectations are essential in creating a patient-centered healthcare system that benefits all stakeholders involved.

Impact of Health Information Technology on Patient Satisfaction

Health information technology (HIT), including electronic health records (EHRs) and telemedicine, significantly impacts patient satisfaction. EHRs streamline the documentation process, reducing errors and enhancing the quality of care. They enable quick access to patient histories, improving diagnostic accuracy and treatment plans, which boosts patient confidence in their healthcare providers. Telemedicine, on the other hand, expands access to care, particularly for patients in remote or underserved areas. It offers the convenience of virtual consultations, reducing the need for travel and minimizing wait times. This flexibility is especially beneficial for patients with mobility issues or chronic conditions requiring frequent follow-ups. Studies indicate that patients appreciate the convenience and accessibility provided by telemedicine, which translates to higher satisfaction levels. Furthermore, HIT enhances patient engagement by providing portals where patients can access their health information, request appointments, and communicate with healthcare providers. This increased transparency and communication foster a collaborative environment, encouraging patients to take an active role in their healthcare. Overall,

the integration of HIT into healthcare systems leads to more efficient, accurate, and patient-centered care, thereby significantly improving patient satisfaction

Role of Technology in Improving Communication and Access to Care

Technology plays a crucial role in enhancing communication and access to care within the healthcare system. Advanced communication tools, such as secure messaging platforms and patient portals, facilitate direct and timely interactions between patients and healthcare providers. These tools enable patients to ask questions, receive medical advice, and obtain test results without needing an in-person visit, thereby increasing convenience and satisfaction. Additionally, telemedicine platforms have revolutionized access to care by allowing patients to connect with healthcare providers from the comfort of their homes. This is particularly valuable for individuals in rural or underserved areas, where access to healthcare facilities may be limited. Telemedicine also reduces the burden on healthcare facilities by decreasing the number of in-person visits, allowing resources to be allocated more efficiently. Furthermore, technology supports the continuity of care by providing seamless access to health records, ensuring that all healthcare providers involved in a patient's care have up-to-date information. This integrated approach enhances the coordination and quality of care, ultimately improving health outcomes. By breaking down barriers to communication and access, technology fosters a more inclusive and responsive healthcare system, leading to higher patient satisfaction.

Patient Perspectives on the Use of Technology in Healthcare

Patients generally view the use of technology in healthcare positively, appreciating the improvements in convenience, access, and quality of care it brings. Many patients find electronic health records (EHRs) beneficial as they provide easy access to their medical histories and test results, empowering them to take an active role in managing their health. The transparency offered by EHRs builds trust and enhances patient-provider relationships. Telemedicine is also highly valued, especially for its ability to offer timely medical consultations without the need for physical travel. This is particularly advantageous for those with mobility issues, chronic conditions, or those living in remote areas. Patients appreciate the reduced waiting times and the flexibility to schedule appointments at their convenience. Moreover, patient portals and mobile health apps enable individuals to manage appointments, refill

prescriptions, and communicate with their healthcare providers, contributing to a more personalized and responsive healthcare experience. However, some patients express concerns about data privacy and the potential impersonal nature of virtual consultations. Addressing these concerns through strong security measures and maintaining a human touch in digital interactions can further enhance patient satisfaction. Overall, patients recognize the significant benefits of healthcare technology, valuing the enhanced access, efficiency, and engagement it offers.

Health Belief Model

The Health Belief Model (HBM) is a psychological model developed to explain and predict health behaviours by focusing on individual beliefs and attitudes. It comprises several components: perceived susceptibility (belief in the likelihood of getting a condition), perceived severity (belief in the seriousness of the condition and its potential consequences), perceived benefits (belief in the efficacy of the advised action to reduce risk or severity), perceived barriers (belief in the tangible and psychological costs of the advised action), cues to action (triggers that prompt engagement in health behaviours), and self-efficacy (confidence in one's ability to take action). In the context of patient satisfaction, the HBM can help understand how patients' beliefs about their health and the healthcare system influence their satisfaction with services. Addressing these beliefs through effective communication and patient education can enhance satisfaction and encourage positive health behaviours.

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory

The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory, originating from consumer behaviour research, is widely applied to understand patient satisfaction. It posits that satisfaction is determined by the discrepancy between patients' expectations and their actual experiences. If the actual service meets or exceeds expectations (positive disconfirmation), patients are satisfied. Conversely, if the service falls short of expectations (negative disconfirmation), dissatisfaction occurs. Expectations are shaped by prior experiences, word-of-mouth, and marketing communications. In healthcare, patients form expectations about various aspects such as wait times, provider competence, and the effectiveness of treatments. Managing these expectations and ensuring they are met or exceeded is crucial for enhancing patient

satisfaction. This theory underscores the importance of continuous feedback and improvement in healthcare services to align with patient expectations.

Relationship-Centered Care Model

The Relationship-Centered Care Model emphasizes the quality of relationships among healthcare providers, patients, and their families as central to healthcare delivery. It emphasizes mutual respect, trust, and collaboration among all parties involved in care processes. This model recognizes that effective communication, empathy, and shared decision-making are essential for building therapeutic alliances and achieving positive patient outcomes. By fostering supportive and respectful relationships, healthcare providers can create environments conducive to patient satisfaction, engagement, and adherence to treatment plans. The Relationship-Centered Care Model encourages healthcare organizations to prioritize relational aspects alongside technical competence, aiming to improve overall care experiences and promote patient-centered care practices.

Patient Satisfaction Index Model

The Patient Satisfaction Index Model focuses on quantifying and analyzing patient satisfaction through structured surveys and indices. It involves systematically collecting feedback from patients regarding their experiences with healthcare services, including aspects such as communication, accessibility, care quality, and outcomes. By aggregating and analyzing survey data, healthcare organizations can identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement. The model often includes benchmarks and comparisons against industry standards or previous performance to track changes in satisfaction over time. Implementing the Patient Satisfaction Index Model enables healthcare providers to tailor interventions and initiatives aimed at enhancing patient experiences and overall satisfaction level

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Patient Expectations and Their Impact on Satisfaction Levels

Patient expectations play a pivotal role in shaping their overall satisfaction with healthcare services. These expectations are shaped by various factors, including previous experiences, cultural influences, healthcare advertising, and the information patients receive from providers and peers. Understanding the dynamics of patient

expectations is essential for healthcare organizations aiming to improve service quality and enhance patient satisfaction.

At the core of patient expectations is the anticipation of receiving care that meets or exceeds their needs. Patients enter healthcare settings with preconceived notions about the quality of service they will receive. These notions are often influenced by their past experiences, both positive and negative. For instance, a patient who has previously received compassionate care from a healthcare provider may expect a similar level of empathy in subsequent interactions. Conversely, a negative experience can lead to lowered expectations, which may affect their overall satisfaction with current care.

Cultural factors also significantly influence patient expectations. Different cultural backgrounds can shape what patients consider acceptable in terms of communication style, involvement in decision-making, and the overall approach to care. For example, some cultures may emphasize direct communication and assertiveness, while others may value a more deferential approach. Healthcare providers must be aware of these cultural differences and adapt their communication strategies accordingly to meet patient expectations and improve satisfaction.

Moreover, the information patients gather about healthcare services through various channels, including advertising and social media, contributes to their expectations. Marketing materials often highlight the strengths of a healthcare facility, such as advanced technology or high success rates. While this information can positively influence expectations, it can also set unrealistically high standards that may lead to disappointment if the actual service falls short. Therefore, it is crucial for healthcare providers to manage expectations through transparent communication about the services they offer.

Patient involvement in the decision-making process is another crucial aspect that shapes expectations. When patients are encouraged to participate actively in their treatment plans, they are more likely to feel valued and satisfied with their care. This collaborative approach helps align provider actions with patient expectations, ultimately leading to a more positive healthcare experience. Providers can enhance patient involvement by encouraging questions, discussing treatment options in detail, and respecting patient preferences.

The physical environment of healthcare facilities also influences patient expectations. Patients often expect a clean, safe, and welcoming environment when seeking care.

Factors such as the appearance of waiting areas, availability of amenities, and overall facility maintenance can significantly affect patient perceptions. An inviting atmosphere not only meets patient expectations but also contributes to their overall satisfaction with the healthcare experience.

Effective communication between healthcare providers and patients is critical in managing expectations. Patients expect clear and honest communication regarding their health status, treatment options, and potential outcomes. When providers take the time to explain medical jargon in understandable terms and actively listen to patient concerns, it fosters trust and enhances satisfaction. On the other hand, poor communication can lead to misunderstandings and unmet expectations, negatively impacting patient satisfaction.

Feedback and Improvement Mechanisms: The Significance of Collecting and Acting on Patient Feedback for Service Quality Improvement

In the healthcare sector, the continuous enhancement of service quality is paramount to ensuring patient satisfaction and improving health outcomes. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is through robust feedback and improvement mechanisms. Collecting and acting on patient feedback provides valuable insights into their experiences, expectations, and satisfaction levels, enabling healthcare organizations to identify strengths and areas needing improvement.

Understanding Patient Feedback

Patient feedback encompasses the opinions, experiences, and evaluations provided by patients regarding the services they receive. This feedback can be gathered through various methods, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, suggestion boxes, and online reviews. By systematically collecting this information, healthcare providers can obtain a comprehensive understanding of patient perceptions about service quality. Patient feedback is multifaceted and can address numerous aspects of healthcare services, including the quality of medical care, the efficiency of administrative processes, staff behaviour, facility cleanliness, and overall patient experience. Understanding this feedback is crucial for identifying trends, common issues, and areas for potential enhancement.

The Importance of Collecting Patient Feedback

Enhancing Patient Experience: Collecting feedback is essential for understanding patient needs and expectations. This understanding allows healthcare providers to tailor services and improve patient experiences. By actively listening to patients, organizations can ensure that they address specific concerns and deliver more patient-centered care.

Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses: Patient feedback provides direct insights into what aspects of service delivery are working well and which areas require attention. Identifying strengths helps organizations reinforce successful practices, while recognizing weaknesses enables targeted interventions for improvement.

Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement: Encouraging patient feedback promotes a culture of continuous quality improvement within healthcare organizations. When feedback is actively sought and valued, it cultivates an environment where staff feel motivated to enhance their performance and service delivery.

Supporting Evidence-Based Decision Making: Patient feedback serves as a valuable source of data that informs decision-making processes. By analyzing feedback trends, healthcare leaders can make informed decisions about resource allocation, staff training, and policy changes that directly impact service quality.

Enhancing Trust and Transparency: Actively seeking and responding to patient feedback fosters trust and transparency between patients and healthcare providers. When patients see their feedback being valued and acted upon, it strengthens their relationship with the organization and enhances their overall satisfaction.

Mechanisms for Collecting Patient Feedback

Surveys and Questionnaires: Structured surveys can be distributed post-visit or via email to gather quantitative and qualitative data on patient experiences. These tools can include Likert scales to assess satisfaction levels and open-ended questions for detailed feedback.

Focus Groups: Engaging small groups of patients in discussions can yield deeper insights into their experiences and perceptions. Focus groups allow for open dialogue and can uncover nuanced perspectives that surveys might miss.

Patient Interviews: Conducting one-on-one interviews with patients can provide valuable qualitative insights into their experiences, allowing for a more personalized understanding of service quality.

Online Reviews and Social Media: Monitoring online reviews and social media feedback can help organizations gauge patient sentiment in real-time and identify areas needing attention.

Suggestion Boxes: Providing physical or digital suggestion boxes encourages patients to share feedback anonymously, promoting candid responses.

Cultural competence and its impact on patient satisfaction

Cultural competence in healthcare refers to the ability of healthcare providers to effectively deliver services that meet the social, cultural, and linguistic needs of patients. It involves understanding and respecting the cultural beliefs, values, practices, and behaviours of diverse patient populations, which can significantly impact patient satisfaction and overall healthcare outcomes.

Healthcare providers who are culturally competent recognize that patients come from various cultural backgrounds, each with its own set of norms, beliefs, and healthcare-seeking behaviours. By embracing cultural competence, providers can bridge communication gaps, build trust, and improve the quality of care they deliver. Here's a detailed explanation of how cultural competence influences patient satisfaction:

Understanding Cultural Competence

Cultural competence starts with awareness and knowledge of cultural diversity. Healthcare providers must educate themselves about different cultures, religions, languages, and customs that may influence how patients perceive and interact with healthcare services. This knowledge helps providers offer respectful and responsive care that aligns with patients' cultural contexts.

Communication and Trust

Effective communication is essential in healthcare interactions, and cultural competence enhances communication by considering linguistic preferences and cultural nuances. For example, some cultures may prioritize indirect communication

styles or deferential language when speaking with healthcare professionals. Understanding these preferences fosters clear and respectful communication, which in turn builds trust between patients and providers.

Respect for Cultural Differences

Respecting cultural differences is a core principle of cultural competence. It involves acknowledging and valuing patients' beliefs, practices, and preferences regarding health and wellness. When patients feel respected and understood within their cultural framework, they are more likely to feel satisfied with the care they receive. Respectful care also reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings or conflicts arising from cultural differences.

Tailoring Healthcare Practices

Cultural competence encourages healthcare providers to adapt their practices to meet the specific needs of diverse patient populations. This may include dietary preferences, religious practices, alternative healing methods, or considerations related to family dynamics and decision-making processes. By tailoring care plans to align with patients' cultural backgrounds, providers can enhance treatment adherence and effectiveness, leading to improved patient outcomes and satisfaction.

Addressing Health Disparities

Cultural competence plays a crucial role in addressing health disparities that affect marginalized or minority communities. These disparities often stem from socioeconomic factors, language barriers, discrimination, or lack of access to culturally appropriate care. Healthcare providers who are culturally competent are better equipped to advocate for equitable treatment and to provide services that meet the unique needs of underserved populations.

Enhancing Patient-Centered Care

Patient-centered care, which prioritizes patients' preferences, values, and goals in decision-making, is closely intertwined with cultural competence. By integrating cultural competence into patient-centered care models, providers ensure that care plans are respectful of and responsive to patients' cultural identities. This approach not only improves patient satisfaction but also strengthens the therapeutic alliance between patients and providers.

Training and Education

Achieving cultural competence requires ongoing training and education for healthcare professionals. Training programs may include workshops, cultural sensitivity seminars, language proficiency courses, and simulations to practice cross-cultural communication. Continuous education ensures that providers remain attuned to evolving cultural dynamics within their patient populations and are equipped to deliver culturally competent care effectively.

Despite its benefits, cultural competence faces challenges such as time constraints, limited resources, and varying levels of cultural diversity within healthcare settings. Addressing these challenges requires organizational commitment, policy support, and collaboration among healthcare teams to embed cultural competence into everyday practices.

Cultural competence is a cornerstone of patient-centered care that enhances communication, builds trust, and improves healthcare outcomes. By embracing cultural diversity and adapting practices to meet the needs of diverse patient populations, healthcare providers can significantly enhance patient satisfaction and contribute to more equitable healthcare delivery. Culturally competent care not only respects patients' cultural identities but also promotes inclusive and effective healthcare interactions that ultimately benefit both patients and healthcare systems as a whole.

CHAPTER III
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In today's healthcare environment, understanding Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction is vital for hospitals to improve their services and maintain a competitive edge. This study focuses on Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurveda Hospital in Thrissur, aiming to explore the effect of service quality on patient satisfaction. By employing various data analysis methods, this research provides insights into how service quality effect patient satisfaction, helping the hospital to enhance its service delivery.

The analysis begins with an overview of demographics, including age group, gender, and occupation of the patients. This demographic information, analyzed using percentage analysis, sets the context for understanding the patient population at Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurveda Hospital.

Next, the study identifies the level of patient satisfaction and service quality at the hospital. To achieve this, mean analysis is employed. This method helps in quantifying the average level of satisfaction and quality perceived by the patients, providing a clear picture of the hospital's performance.

Furthermore, to understand the effect of service quality on patient satisfaction, linear regression analysis is utilized. By identifying which aspects of service quality have the most significant effect on patient satisfaction, the hospital can prioritize improvements in these areas.

3.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 3.2.1: Age Group

Age Group	Frequency
Below 20	0
21-30	5
31-40	17
41-50	21
51-60	28
61 & above	33
Total	104

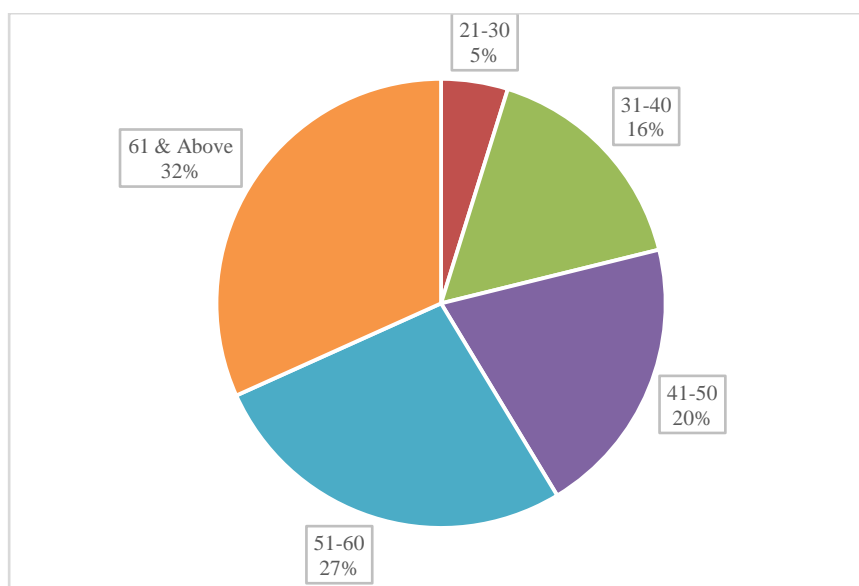


Figure 3.2.1: Age Group

Interpretation: The provided data outlines the age distribution of patients at Oushadhi Panchkarma Ayurveda Hospital, totalling 104 individuals. The largest age group is 61 and above, making up 32% of the total sample. The 51-60 age range follows with 27%. The 41-50 age bracket represents 20%, and the 31-40 range comprises 16%. Younger adults aged 21-30 make up only 5%, while there are no patients below 20 years. This distribution shows a clear concentration of older adults, particularly those aged 51 and above.

Table 3.2.2: Gender

Gender	Frequency
Male	46
Female	58
Others	0
Total	104

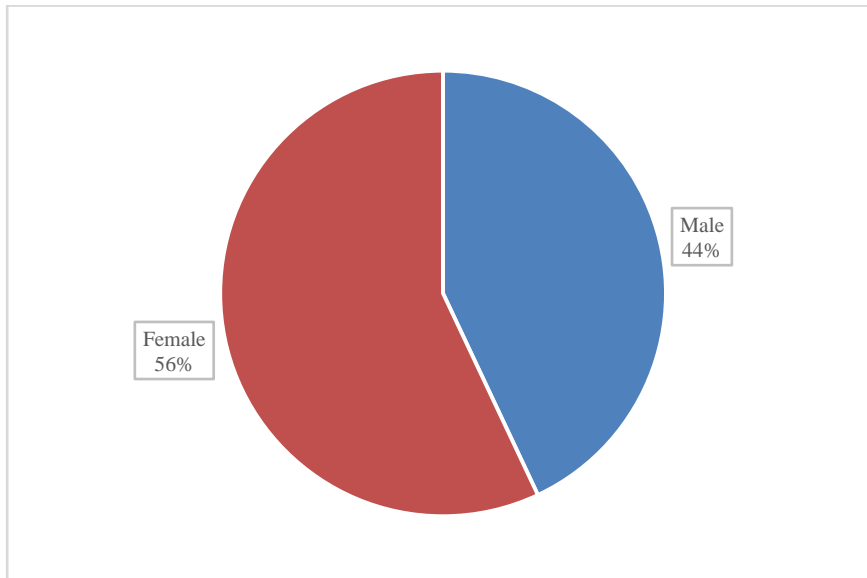


Figure 3.2.2: Gender

Interpretation: The data shows the distribution of genders in a group of 104 individuals. Among them, 44% are Male and 56% are Females. This distribution suggests a slightly higher representation of Females compared to Males within the group. The numbers indicate a clear majority of Females, with Males comprising a significant but smaller portion.

Table 3.2.3: Occupation

Occupation	Frequency
Employed	38
Self Employed	14
Homemaker	35
Retired	17
Others	0
Total	104

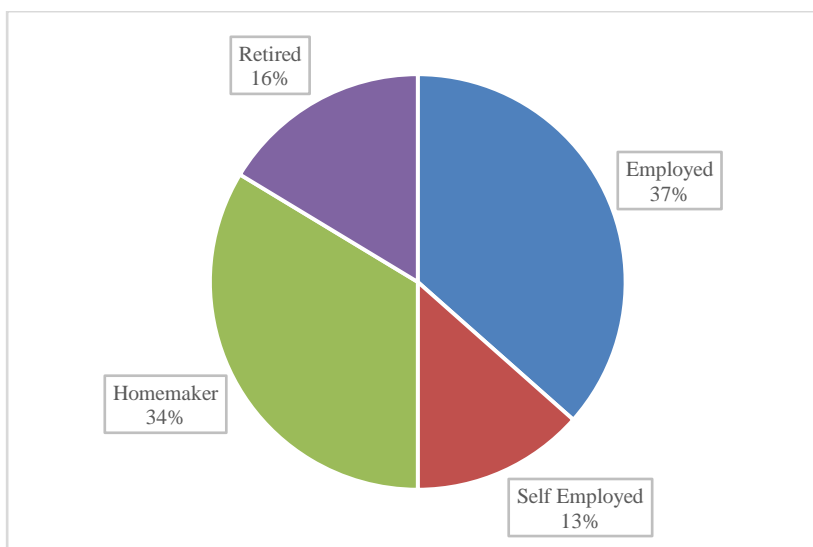


Figure 3.2.3: Occupation

Interpretation: The data presents the distribution of occupations within a group of 104 individuals. Among them, 37% are employed, 13% are self-employed, 34% are homemakers, and 16% are retired. The majority, comprising 38 individuals, are employed. Homemakers follow closely behind, accounting for 35 individuals, indicating a substantial representation in the group. Retirees make up the next significant group with 17 individuals, while self-employed individuals are the smallest group with 14 individuals. This breakdown emphasizes the prevalence of employment as the most common occupation within the group, followed by homemaking, with retirement and self-employment constituting smaller segments.

Table 3.2.4: Previous Experience with Ayurvedic Treatment

Previous Experience With Ayurvedic Treatment	Frequency
Yes	68
No	36
Total	104

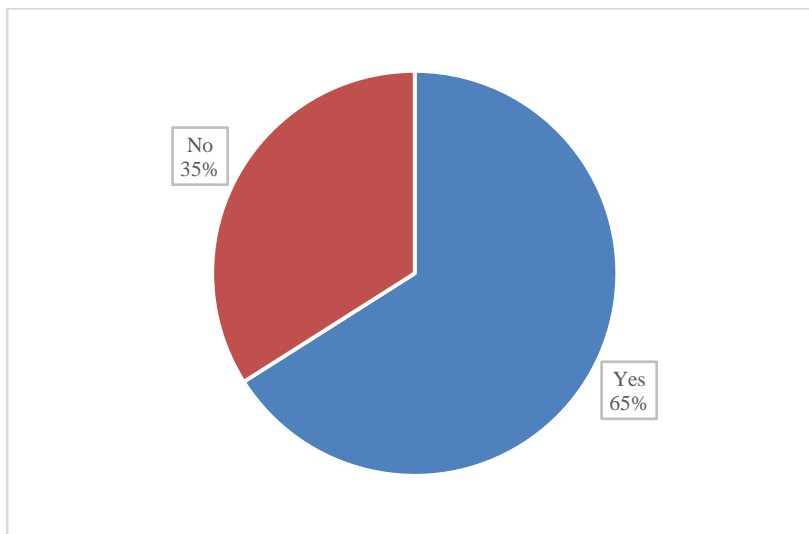


Figure 3.2.4: Previous Experience With Ayurvedic Treatment

Interpretation: This data outlines the previous experiences of 104 individuals with Ayurvedic treatment. Of these, 68 individuals have had prior experience with Ayurvedic treatments, while 36 individuals have not. This indicates a significant majority (about 65%) of the group has tried Ayurvedic treatments at least once.

3.3 Patient Satisfaction

Table 3.3.1: Descriptive Statistics of Patient satisfaction

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Patient Satisfaction	104	3.75	5	4.6587	0.38801

Interpretation: The analysis of patient satisfaction shows that across the sample of 104 patients, ratings ranged from a minimum of 3.75 to a maximum of 5.00, with an average (mean) satisfaction score of 4.6587. This indicates that, patients in the study reported high satisfaction levels with whatever was being evaluated. The standard deviation of 0.38801 suggests that the ratings were relatively tightly clustered around the mean, indicating consistency in patient satisfaction levels across the sample.

3.4 Service Quality

Table 3.4: Descriptive Statistics of Service Quality

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Service Quality	104	3.87	5	4.5372	0.26841

Interpretation: The analysis of service quality indicates that among the 104 observations, ratings for service quality ranged from a minimum of 3.87 to a maximum of 5.00. The service quality was rated at 4.5372, reflecting a generally high level of satisfaction with the service provided. The standard deviation of 0.26841 suggests that the ratings were relatively consistent and clustered closely around the mean, indicating a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the quality of service experienced.

3.5 Service Quality on Patient Satisfaction

Table 3.5.1: Model Summary of Tangibility on Patient Satisfaction

MODEL SUMMARY				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.500 ^a	0.25	0.242	0.3377

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tangibility

Table 3.5.2: Anova Summary of Tangibility on Patient Satisfaction

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.873	1	3.873	33.953	<.001 ^b
	Residual	11.634	102	0.114		
	Total	15.507	103			

a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Tangibility

Table 3.5.3: Coefficients of Tangibility on Patient Satisfaction

COEFFICIENTS						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.124	0.436		4.868	<.001
	Tangibility	0.551	0.095	0.5	5.827	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction

Interpretation: From the above tables, statistical analysis reveals that there is a Significant effect of Tangibility on Patient Satisfaction (Supported H1a). The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.500 indicates that Tangibility has a positive effect on Patient Satisfaction. The R Square value of 0.250 means that 25% of the variability in patient satisfaction can be explained by Tangibility. The ANOVA result with a p value less than 0.001, indicating that the model is fit. The coefficients table indicates that for every unit increase in tangibility, patient satisfaction increases by 0.551 units. This result is significant, as shown by the p-value of less than 0.001 for the Tangibility coefficient. Overall, the analysis suggests that Tangibility is an important factor in determining Patient Satisfaction. Linear Regression equation for Tangibility and Patient Satisfaction is as follows:-

$$\text{Patient Satisfaction} = 2.124 + 0.55 \times (\text{Tangibility})$$

Table 3.5.4: Model Summary of Reliability on Patient Satisfaction

MODEL SUMMARY				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.270 ^a	0.073	0.064	0.3754
a. Predictors: (Constant), Reliability				

Table 3.5.5: Anova Summary of Reliability on Patient Satisfaction

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.131	1	1.131	8.021	.006 ^b
	Residual	14.377	102	0.141		
	Total	15.507	103			
a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Reliability						

Table 3.5.6: Coefficients of Reliability and Patient Satisfaction

COEFFICIENTS						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.35	0.464		7.226	<.001
	Reliability	0.287	0.101	0.27	2.832	0.006
a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction						

Interpretation: From the above tables, the analysis shows that there is Significant effect of Reliability on Patient Satisfaction (Supported H1b). The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.270 indicates that Reliability has a positive effect on patient satisfaction. The R Square value of 0.073 indicates that only 7.3% of the variability in patient satisfaction can be explained by Reliability .The ANOVA result, with a p-value of 0.006, showing that the model is fit. The coefficients table reveals that for every unit increase in reliability, patient satisfaction increases by 0.287 units. This result is significant, as indicated by the p-value of 0.006 for the Reliability coefficient. Overall ,the analysis suggest that Reliability is an important factor in determining Patient Satisfaction. Linear Regression equation for Reliability on Patient Satisfaction is as follows:-

$$\text{Patient Satisfaction} = 3.35 + 0.287 \times (\text{Reliability})$$

Table 3.5.7: Model Summary of Responsiveness on Patient Satisfaction

MODEL SUMMARY				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.296 ^a	0.087	0.079	0.37247
a. Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness				

Table 3.5.8: Anova Summary of Responsiveness on Patient Satisfaction

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.356	1	1.356	9.777	.002 ^b
	Residual	14.151	102	0.139		
	Total	15.507	103			
a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness						

Table 3.5.9: Coefficients of Responsiveness on Patient Satisfaction

COEFFICIENTS						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.372	0.413		8.162	<.001
	Responsiveness	0.284	0.091	0.296	3.127	0.002
a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction						

Interpretation: From the above tables, the analysis indicates that there is a Significant effect of Responsiveness on Patient Satisfaction (Supported H1c).The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.296 indicates that Responsiveness has a positive effect on Patient Satisfaction .The R Square value of 0.087 shows that 8.7% of the variability in patient satisfaction can be explained by responsiveness .The ANOVA result, with a p-value of 0.002, demonstrating that the model is fit. The coefficients table reveals that for every unit increase in responsiveness, patient satisfaction increases by 0.284 units. This result is significant, as indicated by the p-value of 0.002 for the responsiveness coefficient. Overall, the analysis suggest that Responsiveness is an important factor in determining Patient Satisfaction. Linear Regression equation for Reliability on Patient Satisfaction is as follows:-

$$\text{Patient Satisfaction} = 3.372 + 0.284 \times (\text{Responsiveness})$$

Table 3.5.10: Model Summary of Empathy on Patient Satisfaction

MODEL SUMMARY				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.353 ^a	0.125	0.116	0.36480
a. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy				

Table 3.5.11: Anova Summary of Empathy on Patient Satisfaction

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.933	1	1.933	14.527	<.001 ^b
	Residual	13.574	102	0.133		
	Total	15.507	103			
a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy						

Table 3.5.12: Coefficients of Empathy on Patient Satisfaction

COEFFICIENTS						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.421	0.327		10.475	<.001
	Empathy	0.28	0.073	0.353	3.811	<.001
a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction						

Interpretation: From the above tables, the analysis shows a significant effect of Empathy on Patient Satisfaction (Supported H1d). The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.353 indicates that Empathy has a positive effect on Patient Satisfaction. The R Square value of 0.125 indicates that 12.5% of the variability in patient satisfaction can be explained by Empathy. The ANOVA result shows with a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating that the model is fit. The coefficients table indicates that for every one-unit increase in Empathy, the Patient Satisfaction variable increases by 0.280 units. This result is significant with a p-value less than 0.001 for the Empathy coefficient. Overall, the analysis suggests that Empathy is an important factor in determining patient satisfaction. Linear Regression equation for Empathy on Patient Satisfaction is as follows:-

$$\text{Patient Satisfaction} = 3.421 + 0.28 \times (\text{Empathy})$$

Table 3.5.13: Model Summary of Assurance on Patient Satisfaction

MODEL SUMMARY				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.445 ^a	0.198	0.190	0.34921
a. Predictors: (Constant), Assurance				
b. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction				

Table 3.5.14: Anova Summary of Assurance on Patient Satisfaction

ANOVA						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.069	1	3.069	25.166	<.001 ^b
	Residual	12.438	102	0.122		
	Total	15.507	103			
a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Assurance						

Table 3.5.15: Coefficients of Assurance on Patient Satisfaction

COEFFICIENTS						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.509	0.43		5.834	<.001
	assurance	0.469	0.094	0.445	5.017	<.001
a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction						

Interpretation: From the above tables, The data shows a Significant effect of Assurance on Patient Satisfaction (Supported H1e). The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.445 indicates a positive effect of Assurance on Patient Satisfaction. The R Square value of 0.198 indicates that 19.8% of the variability in Patient Satisfaction can be explained by Assurance. The ANOVA result, with a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating the model is fit. The coefficients table reveals that for every one-unit increase in Assurance, the Patient Satisfaction variable increases by 0.469 units. This result is significant with a p-value less than 0.001 for the Assurance Coefficient. Overall, the analysis suggests that Assurance is an important factor in determining Patient Satisfaction. Linear Regression equation for Assurance on patient satisfaction is as follows: -Patient Satisfaction = 2.509 + 0.469 × (Assurance)

Table 3.5.16: Model summary of Service Quality and Patient satisfaction

MODEL SUMMARY				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.544 ^a	0.296	0.289	0.3272
a. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality				

Table 3.5.17: Anova Summary of Service Quality on Patient satisfaction

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.591	1	4.591	42.892	<.001 ^b
	Residual	10.917	102	0.107		
	Total	15.507	103			
a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality						

Table 3.5.18: Coefficients of Service Quality on Patient Satisfaction

COEFFICIENTS						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.09	0.546		1.997	0.048
	Service Quality	0.787	0.12	0.544	6.549	<.001
a. Dependent Variable: Patient Satisfaction						

Interpretation: From the above tables, The analysis shows a Significant effect of Service Quality on Patient Satisfaction (Supported H1). The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.544 indicates positive effect of Service Quality on Patient Satisfaction .The R Square value of 0.296 suggests that 29.6% of the variability in Patient Satisfaction can be explained by Service Quality.The ANOVA result, with a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating that the model is fit. The coefficients table shows that for every one-unit increase in service quality the patient satisfaction variable increases by 0.787

units. This result is significant with a p-value less than 0.001 for the Service Quality Coefficient. Overall, the analysis suggests that Service Quality is an important factor in determining Patient Satisfaction. Regression Equation for patient satisfaction and service quality is as follows:-

$$\text{Patient Satisfaction} = 1.09 + 0.787 \times (\text{Service Quality})$$

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

4.1 FINDINGS

- The demographic profile of Oushadhi Panchkarma Ayurveda Hospital's patients reveal a predominance of older adults, particularly those aged 61 and above (32%). Females slightly outnumber males in the group, comprising 56% of patients. The majority of patients are employed (37%). This reflects a diverse occupational distribution, with employment being the most prevalent. Additionally, a significant majority (about 65%) of the patients have prior experience with Ayurvedic treatments.
- The significant factors of Service Quality that effects Patient Satisfaction are as follows:
 - ❖ **Tangibility** which includes the physical aspects of the service environment significantly affect on Patient Satisfaction. ($R^2= 0.250$, $\beta = 0.551$, $p < 0.001$)
 - ❖ **Reliability** which refers to the consistency and dependability of the service provided significantly affect on Patient Satisfaction. ($R^2= 0.073$, $\beta = 0.287$, p value of 0.006)
 - ❖ **Responsiveness** the willingness of staff to help patients and provide prompt service significantly affect on Patient Satisfaction. ($R^2= 0.087$, $\beta = 0.284$, p value of 0.002)
 - ❖ **Empathy** the provision of caring and individualized attention to patients significantly affect on Patient Satisfaction.($R^2= 0.125$, $\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$)
 - ❖ **Assurance** the knowledge and courtesy of staff and their ability to inspire trust and confidence significantly affect on Patient Satisfaction.($R^2= 0.198$, $\beta = 0.469$, $p < 0.001$)
- Among the above factors Tangibility had the highest affect on patient satisfaction.
- The Mean score of Service Quality (4.5372) indicates that, respondents rated the service quality positively. The standard deviation of 0.26841 suggests that the ratings were relatively consistent and closely clustered around the mean, reflecting a strong agreement among respondents regarding the high quality of service experienced.

- The Mean analysis score of Patient Satisfaction (4.6587) indicates that patients, reported high levels of satisfaction. The standard deviation of 0.38801 suggests that the ratings were tightly clustered around the mean, indicating a consistent level of satisfaction among the patients. The findings suggest that patients were highly satisfied with the aspects of care or services being evaluated, reflecting a positive experience for most respondents.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Service Quality is a critical factor in determining Patient Satisfaction within healthcare facilities. At Oushadhi Panchkarma Ayurveda Hospital, the level of Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction have been rated highly positive. To further enhance patient satisfaction, the hospital should prioritize the following factors:-
 - ❖ To enhance patient satisfaction, the hospital should prioritize improvements in Tangibility, which has the most significant impact. Investing in high-quality equipment and keeping the environment clean and welcoming are crucial steps in this regard. Hospital staff should be neatly dressed and presentable, reflecting professionalism and competence. While Tangibility is important hospital must also prioritize Reliability, Assurance, Empathy and Responsiveness.
 - ❖ Hospitals can improve Reliability by ensuring that treatments and procedures are carried out consistently according to best practices and standards.
 - ❖ Hospitals can improve Responsiveness by implementing efficient scheduling systems, and empowering staff to act promptly to meet patient needs.
 - ❖ Hospitals can improve Empathy by training staff in communication skills, encouraging patient-centered care approaches, and creating a supportive environment that prioritizes understanding patients' perspectives.
 - ❖ Hospitals can improve Assurance by training staff effectively, promoting professional development, and ensuring that healthcare providers communicate clearly and respectfully with patients and their families.
- Improvements in these areas increase patient satisfaction. Together, these elements enhance the overall Quality of Care and Patient Satisfaction.

4.3 SUMMARY

The study focuses on the effect of Service Quality on Patient Satisfaction at Oushadhi Panchakarma Ayurveda Hospital demonstrating that Service Quality plays an important role in Patient satisfaction, which is pivotal in healthcare, reflecting how well the hospital meets patient needs. The study found that Tangibility, which includes the physical facilities are well-maintained and cleaned, visually appealing, and the staff are neatly dressed had the most significant affect on patient satisfaction. While Tangibility is important, the other factors Reliability, Assurance, Empathy, and Responsiveness also show positive affect on patient satisfaction. The study shows that overall, patients rate the quality of service and their satisfaction quite positively. It identifies areas where the hospital could do even better to make patients' visits more enjoyable. By learning from these findings, the hospital can focus on improving specific aspects of how they deliver care, aiming to increase patient satisfaction levels. This research aims to provide practical insights that will help the hospital refine its services and meet patients expectations more effectively.

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES

1. Age

- Below 20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61&above

2. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Others

3. Occupation

- Employed
- Self employed
- Homemaker
- Retired
- Others(please specify)_____

4. Have you ever received ayurvedic treatments before?

- Yes
- No

5. Location _____

TANGIBILITY

6. The hospital physical facilities are well maintained and cleaned.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

7. The hospital physical facilities are visually appealing.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

8. The hospital staff (doctors, nurses) is well dressed and appears neat.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

RELIABILITY

9. Treatments are delivered accurately and consistently.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

10. Appointments are scheduled conveniently with minimal waiting time.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

11. Hospital staff provide clear explanations of treatment plans, and expected outcomes.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

RESPONSIVENESS

12. Hospital staff provide services on time.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

13. Hospital staff are always ready to assist patients with a friendly attitude.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

14. Patients receive quick responses to their inquiries .

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

EMPATHY

15. Hospital Staff give individual care and attention to each patients.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

16. Patients feel valued and respected by the staff.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

17. Hospital staff can accurately understand the needs of patients.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

ASSURANCE

18. Hospital staff are knowledgeable and well-trained in their respective roles.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

19. Hospital staff are courteous and respectful to patients' needs.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

20. The hospital always shows trustworthiness in their services.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

PATIENT SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT

21. Overall iam satisfied with the service and treatment received from Oushadhi.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

22. My experience at this hospital met my expectations.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

23. I would recommend this hospital to my relatives and friends.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

24. I would be happy to return to this hospital for future treatment needs.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree