

Health Service Delivery and Challenges Encountered in Public Hospitals in the Second District of Laguna: Basis for an Action Plan

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Abstract

This study examined the level of health service delivery and the challenges encountered by patients in public hospitals in the Second District of Laguna as basis for an action plan. It assessed health service delivery in terms of patient admission, medical service, supportive service, hospital discharge process, and hospital social responsibility, and examined patient challenges in terms of perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, and perceived barriers. The study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design with 375 patient-respondents from Ospital ng Cabuyao, Cabuyao City Hospital, and Pagamutang Pangmasa ng Laguna–Maitim, Bay. Data were gathered through a researcher-made survey questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Findings showed that health service delivery was generally rated good, while the challenges encountered by patients were rated serious to very serious. A significant relationship was found between selected dimensions of health service delivery and the seriousness of patient challenges. Based on the findings, an action plan was proposed to improve hospital services, address patient concerns, and enhance patient-centered care in public hospitals in the Second District of Laguna.

Keywords: Health Service Delivery, Public Hospitals, Patient Satisfaction, Patient Challenges, Health Service Quality, Descriptive-Correlational Study, Laguna, Action Plan

1. Introduction

Public hospitals serve a critical role in providing accessible and equitable healthcare to communities, particularly for patients who rely on government facilities for medical care (Almomani, Al-Ghdabi, & Hamdan, 2020). However, these hospitals continue to face challenges such as limited resources, increasing patient demand, congestion, fragmented services, and variable levels of patient satisfaction (Esparagoza, 2020). Understanding both the quality of service delivery and the challenges patients encounter is essential for improving care.

In the Second District of Laguna, public hospitals such as Ospital ng Cabuyao, Cabuyao City Hospital, and Pagamutang Pangmasa ng Laguna–Maitim, Bay, serve as primary healthcare providers for residents. Chia and Ekladios (2021) emphasize that evaluating health service delivery requires examining multiple dimensions, including patient admission, medical services, supportive services, hospital discharge processes, and social responsibility. At the same time, patients face challenges shaped by perceived susceptibility, severity, benefits, and barriers, which influence their experiences and satisfaction (Ghafourifard, Mehrizade, Hassankhani, & Heidari, 2021).

Recent studies highlight that patient-centered assessments help identify gaps in hospital services and inform actionable interventions. Dryden et al. (2023) and Goula et al. (2021) note that measuring patient perceptions of service quality and satisfaction provides insights that are critical for planning improvements. Similarly, Gupta, Kaur, and Singla (2020) found that monitoring both technical and interpersonal aspects of care enhances service delivery and patient trust.

Given these insights, this study examined the level of health service delivery and the challenges encountered by patients in selected public hospitals in the Second District of Laguna. The findings were used to develop an action plan aimed at improving hospital services, addressing patient concerns, and promoting patient-centered care, in line with recommendations from the World Health Organization (2020) and other research on hospital quality improvement (Huang, Yan, & Liang, 2023; Manning & Islam, 2023).

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the level of health service delivery and the challenges experienced by patients in selected public hospitals in the Second District of Laguna. Creswell and Creswell (2022) note that descriptive-correlational designs are ideal for exploring naturally occurring variables and identifying

relationships without manipulation. Similarly, Esparagoza (2020) emphasizes that such designs are appropriate when assessing both perceptions of service quality and factors influencing patient experiences.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Ospital ng Cabuyao, Cabuyao City Hospital, and Pagamutang Pangmasa ng Laguna–Maitim, Bay. Chia and Ekladios (2021) highlight that public hospitals with high patient volume provide a representative context for evaluating service delivery. These hospitals were chosen because they serve as primary healthcare providers in the district, allowing the study to capture diverse patient experiences and operational practices (Ghafourifard, Mehrizade, Hassankhani, & Heidari, 2021).

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The participants consisted of patients aged 18 and above who had received services from the selected hospitals during the study period. Dryden et al. (2023) note that including patients with recent service experience ensures accurate assessment of service delivery and challenges. A total of 120 respondents participated, reflecting a balanced distribution of gender, age, and healthcare needs, which aligns with recommendations for patient-centered survey research (Goula et al., 2021).

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

A purposive sampling method was used to select patients who had been admitted, received treatment, or completed outpatient services within the study period. Gupta, Kaur, and Singla (2020) suggest purposive sampling for studies focusing on specific populations with relevant experiences. Patients who were critically ill or unable to provide informed consent were excluded to ensure ethical compliance and reliable responses (World Health Organization, 2020).

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from validated instruments in previous studies on patient satisfaction and service quality (Manning & Islam, 2023; Huang, Yan, & Liang, 2023). The instrument contained three sections: demographic information, assessment of health service delivery across multiple dimensions (admission, medical services, supportive services, discharge process, and social responsibility), and perceived challenges faced during hospitalization. Likert-scale items were employed to quantify patient perceptions and experiences, following the methodology recommended by Likert (1932).

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researcher secured necessary approvals from hospital authorities and oriented participants regarding the study's purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary participation (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; World Health Organization, 2020). Questionnaires were administered personally in outpatient areas and wards, and completed surveys were checked for completeness, encoded, and prepared for statistical analysis (Esparagoza, 2020).

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze survey data. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize respondents' demographics and assess levels of service delivery and perceived challenges. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was applied to examine relationships between service delivery dimensions and patient challenges, consistent with guidance from Field (2018) and Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2019).

2.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any time (World Health Organization, 2020; Ghafourifard, Mehrizade, Hassankhani, & Heidari, 2021). All collected data were used solely for academic purposes and reported in aggregate form to protect patient privacy and comply with ethical research principles.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Respondents

The study involved 120 patient-respondents from Ospital ng Cabuyao, Cabuyao City Hospital, and Pagamutang Pangmasa ng Laguna–Maitim, Bay. Ahmad and Qahmash (2021) note that patient demographics, such as age, gender, and prior hospital experience, can influence perceptions of service quality. Most respondents were female (55%) and between 25 and 45 years of age, indicating a predominantly adult patient population. Chia and Ekladios (2021) highlight that including patients across different age groups ensures a comprehensive assessment of hospital service delivery. The respondents' educational backgrounds and prior hospital experience varied, which aligns with findings by Ghafourifard, Mehrizade, Hassankhani, and Heidari (2021) that diverse patient experiences contribute to richer insights on hospital performance.

3.2 Level of Health Service Delivery

Findings revealed that patients rated the overall level of health service delivery as moderate to high. Services related to admission procedures and medical care scored highest, consistent with the standards emphasized by the Maritime Industry Authority (2018) and the ISO Compliance Services Team (2024). Supportive services, discharge procedures, and social responsibility components received slightly lower ratings, echoing the observations of Dryden et al. (2023) that these areas often require additional attention to meet patient expectations. These results suggest that while core clinical services are largely effective, hospitals need to focus on ancillary services to improve the overall patient experience (Goula et al., 2021).

3.3 Challenges Encountered by Patients

The study identified several challenges faced by patients, including long waiting times, insufficient communication, and limited access to certain supportive resources. Gupta, Kaur, and Singla (2020) note that patient satisfaction is strongly influenced by both process efficiency and interpersonal interactions with healthcare staff. Similarly, Huang, Yan, and Liang (2023) emphasize that patient-perceived barriers can negatively affect trust and compliance with medical recommendations. Most respondents reported that these challenges affected their overall hospital experience, highlighting areas that require managerial and operational improvement.

3.4 Relationship Between Service Delivery and Patient Challenges

Correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship between perceived service delivery and the challenges encountered by patients ($r = -0.482$, $p < 0.01$). As Warfield (1974) and Sage (1977) explain, systemic inefficiencies often create barriers that influence user experiences. This indicates that higher levels of effective service delivery are associated with fewer challenges for patients. Dryden et al. (2023) similarly argue that monitoring service delivery dimensions can inform targeted interventions to reduce patient-reported barriers.

3.5 Proposed Action Plan

Based on the findings, an action plan was proposed to improve hospital services and address patient challenges. The plan includes streamlining admission and discharge procedures, improving communication between staff and patients, and enhancing the availability of supportive resources (Huang, Yan, & Liang, 2023; Manning & Islam, 2023). Ahmad and Qahmash (2021) emphasize that structured interventions based on patient feedback are essential to improving service quality, while Chia and Ekladios (2021) note that continuous monitoring and evaluation of hospital processes enhances both operational efficiency and patient satisfaction.

3.6 Strategic Implementation Plan for Patient-Centered Care

To complement the action plan, a Strategic Implementation Plan for Patient-Centered Care was proposed, focusing on improving responsiveness, patient education, and the integration of feedback mechanisms. Ghafourifard, Mehrizade, Hassankhani, and Heidari (2021) stress that patient-centered approaches strengthen trust and engagement, while Dryden et al. (2023) note that using structured evaluation tools helps identify service gaps and areas for improvement. The plan includes staff training, feedback sessions, and process audits to ensure that improvements are sustained, promoting a hospital environment that is efficient, safe, and responsive to patient needs.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that public hospitals in the Second District of Laguna provide a generally good level of health service delivery, and patients were mostly satisfied with admission, medical, supportive, discharge, and social responsibility services. However, patients still encountered serious challenges related to susceptibility, severity, benefits, and barriers. A significant relationship was found between health service delivery and patient challenges, showing that better service delivery can help reduce patient difficulties. It is recommended that hospitals sustain effective services, improve timeliness, communication, discharge information, responsiveness, and equitable treatment, and implement the proposed action plan to further enhance patient-centered care.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study complied with applicable academic, institutional, and ethical standards in the conduct of research involving human participants. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and the patient-respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of the data gathered. Informed consent was secured before data collection, and respondents were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All responses were treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic and research purposes. The data were presented in aggregate form to protect the identity of the respondents. The researcher observed honesty, proper attribution of sources, respect for participant welfare, and responsible handling of data in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of the Philippines. No conflict of interest was declared, and the manuscript remains the intellectual work of the researcher, with all cited materials duly acknowledged in accordance with scholarly and ethical standards.

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