



SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE REFORM IN THE OUTPATIENT CARE

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of periodic surveys of citizens' opinions on key issues relating to their lives and health takes place in the projects and initiatives of various organizations and institutions. Conducting surveys in health care is common practice in the developed European countries. All this is done to improve the quality of medical services and health care.

The purpose of this study is: To investigate the opinion of citizens about their access to outpatient specialized medical care, and their satisfaction for the medical service at the medical centers in the city of Stara Zagora.

Material and Methods: An anonymous survey of 340 patients visited the specialists at seven medical centers in Stara Zagora for one month - December 2010, the survey was carried out by students studying in Medical College.

Results: A high proportion (60.6%) of the surveyed patients were satisfied with access to outpatient specialized medical care. A significant proportion of the respondents are not fully satisfied and a small part are not satisfied because of insufficient time for the examination and insufficient information they receive about their condition. The majority of the respondents had access to (directed by GP) to visit a specialist, but they were not satisfied with the additional medical examination and consultations received by specialists and related to their expectations.

Key words: access, medical activities, health care, satisfaction

The implementation of periodic surveys of citizens' opinions on key issues relating to their lives and health is reflected in the projects and initiatives of various organizations and institutions. The developed National Health Strategy Project puts important emphasis on the quality of medical care and activities for the period 2014-2020 (3).

In developed European countries the conduct of surveys, including in the healthcare, is a common practice. All this is done to improve the quality of medical services and health care. Man patient as a user (client) of these services has the right to require a high level of service from the relevant institutions and professionals working

there. As Z. Petrova stated : "The quality is based on multiple criteria for the patients, where subjectivity has a major role in the ultimate satisfaction" (1, p.175). The same author

analyzes the concept of the WHO for the quality of medical care and refers to accessibility and satisfaction as key features of the concept of quality. (1, p.176).

A.Stoychev, states that "the concept of equitable access to health care is complicated by the difficulty to define the minimum necessary health care in a dynamically changing environment." (2, p 206).

In light of the above, in the context of continuous health care reforms is the idea to study the patient's view of their access to specialized out-patient care and their satisfaction

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with services. This idea is realized in cooperation with RHI in the territory of Stara Zagora.

Object of study centers for outpatient care in Stara Zagora - "MC - Health M" Ltd.; "I DKC Stara Zagora" Ltd.; "DCC Health 2000" Ltd.; "DCC Transport" Ltd.; "MC Prof. Assoc. Kirkovich "Ltd.; "MC Ivan Rilski" Ltd.; "MC Rhythm 2001" LTD.

The purpose of this study is: To investigate the opinion of citizens to access to outpatient specialized medical care, and their satisfaction on medical treatment at medical centers in the city of Stara Zagora.

Tasks

1. Developing tools - questionnaire by programmers RHI - Stara Zagora.
2. Briefing for participants in the survey.
3. Approbation of the questionnaire in one of the medical centers in Stara Zagora.
4. Informing the Directors of medical centers for the upcoming survey.
5. Conducting the survey in 6 centers randomly selected.
6. Analysis and processing of the results.
7. Informing the public about the results of the study.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

An anonymous survey of 340 patients referred to specialists at seven medical centers in Stara Zagora for a month - December 2011 poll carried out by students enrolled in the College of Medicine.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents were 340 patients, of whom 148 men / 43.5% / and 192 women / 56.5% /.

The age structure of the study is presented in **Figure 1**:

- Under 18 years - 14 / 4.1% /;
- From 18 to 44 years - 159 / 46.8% /;
- From 45 to 64 years- 119/35% /;
- Over 65 years - 48 / 14.1%.

It is obvious that the largest proportion of people of working age from 18 to 64, which increases the importance of evaluations that citizens give to outpatient care in Stara Zagora.

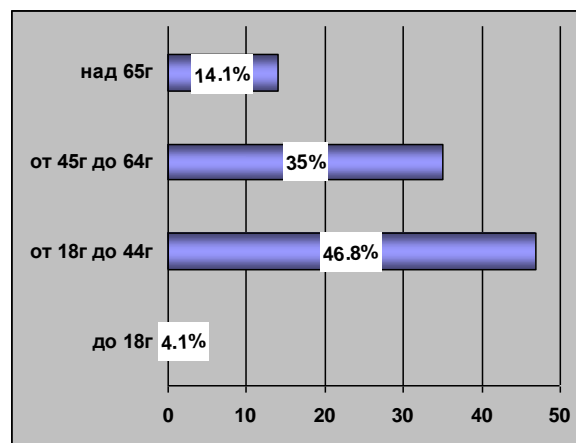


Figure 1. Respondents by age groups

The city residents are 249 or 73.2% of the total respondents, while in the countryside live 91 patients or 26.8%. These figures are not enough to show to what extent there are differences, and whether they are possibilities for rural and urban residents to use specialized medical care / such an assessment would be possible in the survey of patients regarding their GPs /.



Figure 2. Demographic structure of the surveyed

According to residence: 26.8%- city; 73.2%-village

The answers of the main question of the survey about the citizen satisfaction of medical service in medical facilities show following results: 206 people gave a positive answer, which makes 60.6% of the total of 340 respondents. Dissatisfied citizens are 39 or 11.5%, partly /somewhat/ satisfaction with medical service showed 95 respondents or 27.9% citizens.

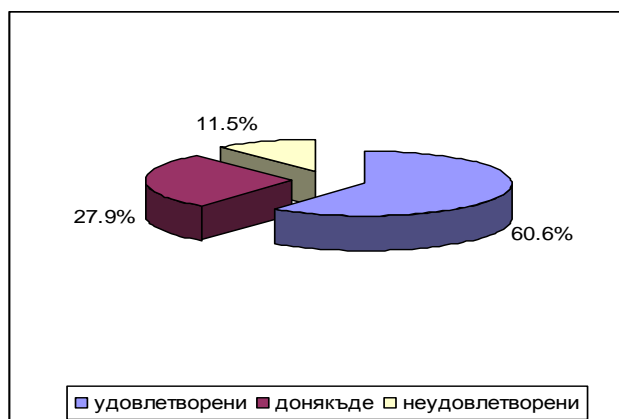
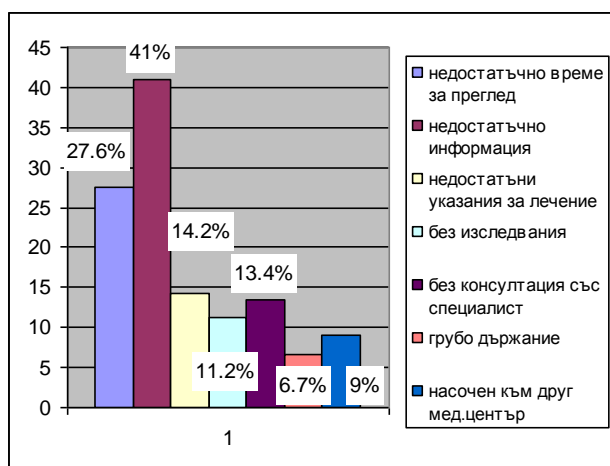


Figure 3. Satisfaction of visitors – patients

60.6% Satisfied; 27.9% Partly; 11.5% Dissatisfied

The answers of those citizens who gave reasons for their dissatisfaction are of significant interest. 39 / 11.5% / of the citizens are fully dissatisfied with the outpatient specialist medical care, and those who are "partly" dissatisfied are 95 / 27.9% /. On this basis are the answers for the reasons for dissatisfaction. These responses are divided and displayed in **Figure 4**.



1. Doctor took insufficient time for my examination - 37 answers / 27, 6% /;
2. Did not receive enough information and condition - 55 answers / 41.0% /;
3. Did not get enough instructions of my treatment - 19 answers / 14.2% /;
4. The doctor did not do medical tests / despite my expectations / - 15 answers / 11.2% /;
5. Doctor did not send me for further consultations / despite my expectations / - 18 answers / 13.4% /;
6. Doctor is rude and disrespectful to me - 9 answers / 6.7% /;

7. The center does not have sufficient equipment and I was directed to another - 12 answers / 9.0% /.

About 1.5% of those surveyed reported other reasons.

Interesting are the answers to the question about whose initiative was the visit of the patient to a specialist medical center. Less than half of the 145 / 42.6% / of the respondents are directed from the GP; 106 / 31.2% / of the respondents asked their GP for directing to a specialist. 74 / 21.8% / citizens visited medical centers on its own initiative and without a medical direction. Such studies suggest that the predominant is the number of patients directed from GP to specialized care and hospitalization.

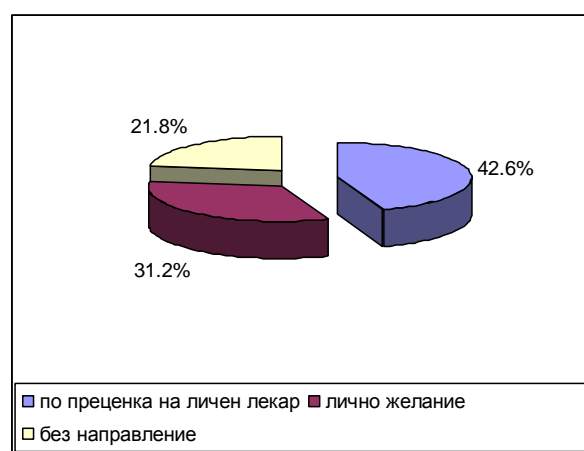


Figure 5. Initiative to visit specialist

42.6% At the discretion of the doctor; 31.2% Personal wish; 21.8% Without direction
Analyzing these responses we can draw the following conclusions:

1. Highest share (60.6%) of the study patients were satisfied with the access to specialized medical out-patient care.
2. Significant proportion of the respondents is not fully satisfied and a small part is not satisfied because of insufficient time for examination and lack of information that they receive about their condition.
3. Majority of the respondents had access to (directed by GP) to visit a specialist, but not satisfied with the additional medical tests and consultations received by specialists related to their expectations.

In conclusion we can state that medical centers are a source of information on access to specialized out-patient care and the quality of services offered to citizens. It is necessary to

periodically perform such studies to take into account the real needs of the population of medical services and care regarding the process of reform in the health system.

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