

## ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in order to compare the structure, selected processes and patient satisfaction in relation to curative health care delivery in the government estate and non-estate hospitals (Divisional hospital Type C) in the district of Ratnapura.

A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out in five randomly selected estate hospitals and five non-estate hospitals in the Ratnapura district. Facility survey was conducted using a check list. Focus group discussion was used as a tool to gather and compare data on administrative and managerial processes. A pre-tested questionnaire was applied on 400 randomly selected patients to describe the client satisfaction. All data were compared between estate and non-estate hospitals.

Out of the sample of five estate hospitals two hospitals (40%) did not have wards for male and female patients separately, while all non-estate hospitals were having separate wards. Three (60%) of estate and two (40%) non-estate hospitals did not have an ETU. There was a difference in availability of equipments between types of hospitals. All hospitals had ante-natal and medical clinics. None had a laboratory, but one non-estate hospital did blood test for malaria parasite and sputum acid-fast bacilli.

Availability of human recourses was low in estate hospitals. They had only 30% of approved medical officers while non-estate hospitals had an excess of 37%. No nursing officers worked at estate hospitals, but the non-estate hospitals had 4% above

approved cadre of NOs. Estate hospitals had a shortage of minor staff. But no difference was observed in administrative and managerial processes in two types of hospitals.

There was a significant difference ( $P < 0.05$ ) of patients attending two types of hospitals in ethnicity, educational level, place of residence and monthly income. 47% of patients came to estate hospitals were Sinhalese, who reside outside the estate. For non-estate hospitals it was 89% Sinhalese. Patients in estate hospitals had lower education level and lower income. Waiting time in estate hospitals was higher than non-estate hospitals ( $P < 0.05$ ).

Overall satisfaction in both types of hospitals was around 85%. But 22% of estate patients were highly satisfied compared to 10% in non estate hospitals ( $P < 0.05$ ). Satisfaction did not vary with demographic characteristics or waiting time, place of residence or frequency of visits.

Further to overall satisfaction, the patients' satisfaction was compared in seven selected aspects. Patients at estate hospitals showed a significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) low satisfaction in interpersonal aspect and access and convenience, non- estate patients showed a significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) lower satisfaction in financial aspect. No difference was observed in general satisfaction, communication, technical aspect and time spend with doctor.

The observed difference of overall satisfaction may be attributed to the difference in facilities and services in estate hospitals. It is recommended to improve facilities and appoint more personnel to estate hospitals. Lengthening the opening hours of the OPD of estate hospitals need to be reconsidered.

**Key words:** Estate, hospitals, satisfaction