

Abstract

Patient experience is considered a key component in quality of healthcare. Assessment of patient experience is used to improve quality of healthcare and gradual and continuous introduction of patient centred care as recommended by WHO. In line with world trends Sri Lanka also has started patient experience surveys. Although military hospitals are expected to have best quality of care, studies done on patient experience of military hospitals are scarce.

Even though, Army Hospital, Colombo, Sri Lanka is in the process of quality improvement, patient experience or patient satisfaction was never studied in the hospital. Hence, this study was carried out to study the in-patient experience to boost the quality improvement in Army Hospital, Colombo.

Assessing the level of patient experience of inpatients of medical, general surgical and officers' wards and describing the socio-demographic and service-related factors were the objectives of the study.

This is a hospital based cross sectional descriptive study conducted from March 2019 to November 2019. Sample size was 423 and samples taken from seven strata (each ward) in their percentage of discharges. Data collection was done on August 2019 with a self-administrated five-point likert scale closed ended questionnaire prepared along the domains of, admission, hospital and ward, care and treatment, care of doctors, care of nurses and leaving the hospital. It was found that patient experience of all domains was well above the neutral level. Frequency analysis has shown that perceived patient experience is also at very high levels.

It was evident that youngest age group had the best patient experience in hospital and ward ($F=6.334$, $P=0.002$), care of doctors ($F=5.024$, $P=0.007$) and care of nurses ($F=4.046$, $P=0.018$) domains. Lowest educational status group had the best patient experience in care and treatment ($F=4.014$, $P=0.008$) and leaving hospital ($F=3.928$, $P=0.009$) domains. Patient experience is better in participants without daily activity limitation in hospital and ward domain ($P=0.008$). Non-commissioned officers have significantly better patient experience than commissioned officers in leaving hospital domain ($F=5.086$, $P=0.007$). Soldiers of support regiments have significantly better patient experience than service units in care and treatment ($F=3.372$, $P=0.035$) and leaving hospital ($F=6.266$, $P=0.002$) domains. Participants without any medical category (no disability) has significantly better patient experience in hospital and wards ($F=10.450$, $P=0.000$) and leaving hospital ($F=4.643$, $P=0.010$) domains.

Timeliness of service delivery was positively responded by majority of the participants. Communication has also got majority of positive answers but a little lower than the other areas of patient experience.

From this study, it is identified that communication skills of the doctors and nurses in ETU, pre-operative and post-operative wards need prompt attention. Further in detail studies need to be done in the similar setting to identify the real problems and reasons for some groups' significant association to patient experience. Yearly patient experience survey should be conducted for comparison and assess the improvement of quality in the hospital.

Keywords : Patient experience, In-patient, Military, Army Hospital, Colombo, Sri Lanka