

Abstract

Background: Sri Lanka remains a low HIV prevalent country since the identification of first HIV infected person in 1987. One of the reasons for Sri Lanka to able to maintain this state is having a well-organized campaign to take necessary preventive measures from the beginning of the epidemic. With the recent rise in HIV and STD diagnoses, a strong mutual understanding must be maintained between patients and the caregivers to retain patients linked to care. Patient satisfaction plays a major role in achieving this goal. Patient satisfaction is a useful factor to assess the quality of health care delivery and this will minimize the number of treatment & follow up defaulters. Therefore, this study was done to assess the level of patient satisfaction on STD and HIV care provided by Central clinic, Colombo.

Objective: To describe patient satisfaction with HIV and STI services provided by the Central STD clinic Colombo.

Method: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at the Central STD & HIV clinic, National STD/AIDS control programme, Colombo. Subjects were selected using a systematic sampling method from the clinic attendees above 18 years of age during a period of 3 months, from January 2020 to March 2020. Patients who were mentally unsound, children aged less than 18 years and those who refused to participate in the study were excluded. Data was collected through interviewer administered questionnaires and through mobile phone calls due to COVID 19 pandemic in the latter part of the study. Data on satisfaction was collected under four domains, Socio demographic data of clinic attendees, Facilities provided by the clinic, Services provided by the clinic, and Privacy & confidentiality maintained at the clinic. Level of satisfaction was compared with the biological sex using Chi – square test.

Results: Study sample consisted of 221(65.4%) males and 117(34.6%) females. There were 2 (0.6%) transgender women. Most of patients were from Western Province (61.5%). Highest percentage of patients belonged to 25-35 years age group. Of the population, 80.2% were STD clinic attendees and 18.5% were HIV clinic attendees. Most of the patients claimed to be heterosexual (68.6%). Nearly 52% of patients were married or living together and 36.4% of patients

were unmarried. Around 80% of study subjects had some level of school education, and 20% were having higher educational qualifications.

Patient satisfaction on staff patient communication was assessed through 3 questions. Namely, satisfaction on punctuality of the staff, friendliness of the staff and satisfaction on explanations given by the doctor. Out of the study participants, 283(83.7%), 272(80.5%), 291(86.1%) were satisfied respectively. There was a significant difference between males and females.

Patient satisfaction regarding staff attitudes was assessed by inquiring about the perceived discrimination. Majority (298, 88.2%) have not felt discriminated, only 12% claimed discriminated. Regarding satisfaction on respect and concern received, 61.2% were satisfied about the registration and 85.2% were satisfied about doctor's response. There was a significant difference in level of satisfaction between males and females.

Patient satisfaction on facilities provided at the clinic was assessed under 6 variables. Only 40% of subjects were satisfied about the convenience in locating the clinic, 78.4% were satisfied about the cleanliness and sanitary facilities of the clinic environment, 53% were satisfied with the waiting time for registration, only 26.6% were satisfied with the waiting time to meet the doctor, 84% were satisfied with the time spent with the doctor, and 38.8% were satisfied with the overall waiting time at the clinic.

Patient satisfaction regarding privacy and confidentiality maintained at the clinic was 95%. There was no significant difference between males and females ($P>0.05$). Satisfaction on the overall care received at the clinic was 76%. There was no significant difference between males and females.

Discussion: Overall patient satisfaction was 76% on the services provided by the STD clinic. Patients showed less satisfaction in some of the areas questioned like waiting time for registration, to meet the doctor, and waiting time at the clinic. Subjects were satisfied with the communication, attitudes, privacy and confidentiality maintained by the staff.

Conclusion: Patients were satisfied with the services provided, but long waiting times for registration and meeting the doctor were the major unsatisfying factors. Therefore, making necessary improvements such as prior appointment system and expansion of clinic hours to minimize overcrowding, will help to increase the level of satisfaction among clinic attendees.

Keywords: Patient satisfaction, Sri Lanka, STD/HIV care