1. **ABSTRACT**

A patient satisfaction survey was conducted on 68 patients discharged from the medical unit, 71 from the maternity unit and 61 mothers of children discharged from the paediatric unit drawn as stratified random samples from 670 discharges from Base Hospital Kegalla, Sri Lanka, during October 1989. This was followed by a staff training programme to the staff in the paediatric unit and after two weeks another sample of 49 mothers was studied.

An interviewer administered questionnaire was used in the collection of data. The general objective of the study was to explore patient satisfaction. The specific objectives were to determine group variations of patient satisfaction in the three units; to examine the relationship between satisfaction and patient attributes; and to compare the variations in patient satisfaction of the paediatric unit children's mothers before and after the staff training programme.

The findings revealed high levels of patient satisfaction to medical treatment, nursing care, doctor-patient communication and friendliness of the medical and nursing staff; exception being the work performance of the minor employees.
Patient satisfaction was not found to be influenced by education, income, residence, type of admission and length of hospital stay of the respondents.

In the mothers interviewed after the staff training programme, staff delivering health education talks, mothers taking hospital diet, communication and friendliness of the minor employees and the consultant's explanation of the illness to the satisfaction of the mother, showed very high significant increases. House officers' practice of issuing diagnosis cards to the discharged patients increased very highly significantly and the mothers' satisfaction of the house officers' explanation of the illness was significantly high.

The study showed that the minor employees have benefitted from the staff training programme. Training the minor employees is important because of their large number, multiplicity of their work roles and their intimate social interactions with patients.

Monitoring patient satisfaction is feasible and useful to understand patients' unmet needs and patient satisfaction studies could be helpful as a management tool to improve the quality of patient care services.