

SYNOPSIS

Introduction: In Sri Lanka NCDs account for a major part of the health care burden. As the healthcare is considered as one of the most fast-growing industries in the world it is important to assess service quality delivery in health care and the perceived satisfaction of patients.

Objective: To conduct an intervention to improve mentorship and service quality of Non -Communicable Disease (NCD) clinic services of selected primary care institutions in Nuwara Eliya district.

Methods: An interventional study was conducted in purposefully selected four Divisional Hospitals in the Nuwara Eliya district. The study was conducted in three phases. During the first phase (pre intervention phase), existing situation with regard to perception of service quality among patients was assessed by using SERVQUAL service evaluation model. Hospital facility check list, Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions among nursing officers and medical officers, were conducted to carry out describe the readiness of institutions to provide a quality service.

Based on the gaps identified, during the second phase an intervention was planned with the participation of stakeholders. The activities planned and conducted at NCD clinics were process improvement, 5 S implementation, refurbishing of NCD clinics with improving service accessibility for differently abled patients, introduction of a mentorship programme, training of staff, improving health education facilities at NCD clinics by displaying posters, banners, leaflets and educational videos, implementing NCD libraries, roving

patients' investigation facilities, the establishment of clinic time according to patients' feasibility, provision of suggestion boxes with safe drinking water facility, displaying hospital telephone numbers in clinic books and record keeping improvement of patients' records, augmentation of condemning process and redistribution of equipment and furniture, appreciation of health staff are them. During the third phase the intervention was evaluated based on the results framework.

Results and Discussion: At the end of first phase, gaps were identified in the service quality, and mentoring and guidance of NCD clinics in four Divisional Hospitals of Nuwara Eliya district in order to develop suitable interventions to improve the situation. Several infrastructural improvements were carried out during intervention like establishment of additional drug dispensing counters and information desk to provide information for the patients at NCD clinics in all hospitals.

A significant improvement was observed after the intervention with perceived service quality (overall Responsiveness ($t=43.0;p<0.001$), Empathy ($t=23.0;p<0.001$), Reliability($t=3.2;p<0.001$) and Tangibles($t=18.6;p<0.001$)). It was noted that checking the blood pressure and fasting blood sugar was carried out in all patients after the intervention. A mentoring guideline was developed and implemented in the selected institutions. As time permitted only one mentoring visit was possible to assess the effectiveness of the mentoring programme in improving the quality of services. During evaluation it was shown that the intervention had relevance and coherence to current programmes. Also, effectiveness of the service delivery has shown

improvement ($p < 0.05$). And there is the sustainability of the intervention as minimum gaps in human resources and medical supplies. However, a dedicated focal point at each institution is needed to continue with the interventions.

Conclusions: The pre-intervention phase showed poor service quality and several infrastructure and administrative gaps in providing quality service. An intervention package was developed and implemented to address the gaps. After the intervention, there was a significant improvement in service quality. It was also observed that this intervention was relevant, coherent, and effective. The sustainability of the intervention is questionable as there needs to be a dedicated person to act as the focal point for mentoring and continuous motivation of the staff is needed.

Recommendations: It is recommended to study the mentoring guideline developed and after further development to use it for a national programme on mentoring and guidance. Regular staff appraisal needs to be carried out to appraise and motivate the staff.

Key words: Non-Communicable disease, Service quality, Mentoring.