

## **258: HEALTH CARE OUTCOMES FROM THE PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE**

*Lorenzo S., Mira J.J., Moyano S.*

### **Objective:**

To explore the usefulness of a questionnaire that combines two outcome measures (health-related quality of life and patient satisfaction) in hospitalized patients.

### **Material and Methods:**

A questionnaire was constructed using two validated instruments to evaluate patient satisfaction and quality of life. Quality of service is a measure of how well a service matches customer expectations. The validated adapted version of Servqual to hospitalized patients in the Spanish setting was used. Subjects were asked to rate each item on a five-point scale from 'strong agreement' (5) to 'strong disagreement' (1). Items explore general satisfaction and perceived quality. Health related quality of life (HRQL) was measured using the EuroQol 5D (EQ-5D), a validated scale in our setting. EQ-5D analyzes five dimensions of the patient's own health status (mobility, personal care, daily activities, pain/malaise, and anxiety/depression), and includes a visual analogic scale.

Data collection was carried out in May 2001. A random sample of 560 adult patients who had been hospitalized and discharged 15 days before the study period received a mail questionnaire sent to the patients' homes. With the questionnaire, all the subjects received an explanatory letter. In this letter the hospital manager asked for participation and expressed a guarantee of confidentiality. If subjects agreed to participate, they were asked to return the questionnaire directly to the researchers in the postage-paid envelope provided.

### **Results:**

200 patients (35.71%) answered the questionnaire. 43.43% were men, mean age 57.93 years. 15.22% had no studies, 50% had primary studies, 21.2% secondary and 13.59% a university degree. 23.94% were housewives; 5.85% unemployed, 48.68% retired and 25% employed. 50.26% were very satisfied with hospitalization and 41.97% were satisfied. 144 patients (72% of those who answered the questionnaire) filled the analogic scale regarding their health status. A significant correlation ( $p < 0.01$ ) was observed among the visual analogic measurement of HRQL and different attributes of quality of service: technology ( $p < 0.01$ ), interest ( $p < 0.01$ ), quickness ( $p < 0.01$ ), nursing attention ( $p < 0.01$ ), capacity ( $p < 0.01$ ) and problem solving capacity ( $p < 0.01$ ).

### **Conclusions:**

Health care outcome measurement is one of the most difficult tasks in health care management. Health care quality of life and patient satisfaction instruments will increasingly be used as outcome variables. Our findings characterize the two questionnaires as complementary.

The combined questionnaire demonstrated feasibility, its use requires limited resources and can be simply applied in our setting. The systematic use of such instruments can let us measure outcomes of health care provided, it might let us also make comparisons between hospitals, as a benchmark tool for quality improvement.