

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR PATIENT SATISFACTION COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: DR. ENESCU MEDICAL CLINIC AND GAESTI TOWN HOSPITAL

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Manuscript received: 05.03.2017; Accepted paper: 15.04.2017;

Published online: 30.06.2017.

Abstract. *Romanian health system faces many problems, especially the lack of personnel or of the equipment necessary for the prevention and treatment of diseases, hygiene etc. All these shortcomings are borne by patients, who are increasingly making comparisons with the health systems abroad, where Romania is always ranked last. In search of providers of quality healthcare, patients frequently resort to private health care system, which provides, against payment, all that the public sector lacks: well-trained staff, the latest equipment, reduced waiting time (the patient is consulted on appointment- basis), impeccable conditions of hygiene, staff courtesy, home medical services etc. These shortcomings have led us to hear the views of the beneficiaries of medical services of the two sectors: public and private.*

Keywords: *medical services, benchmarking, patient satisfaction.*

1. INTRODUCTION

”Health represents one of the most important factors with direct implications for the smooth functioning of life and of the economic- financial activity. Health care is a public service with specific characteristics; it cannot only be subject to market needs but, at the same time, it must undergo an administrative economy” [1].

The main beneficiary of all medical care is the patient, and the one who buys these services is represented by the National Health Insurance Fund. Medical services are solely based on an agreement recorded in the contracts which are concluded between the hospital and the health insurance fund [2].

The offer for health services in Romania is divided in two sectors: the public sector and the private sector, and the distribution of health units in the counties is uneven, most of them being owned by the Romanian state. In Romania, there are three service packages offered by the health system [4]: the basic services package; the package afforded to individuals who opt for an optional insurance; the minimum package of services.

The health services offer is composed of the development and territorial spreading level of the health infrastructure, medical staffing, conditions for supply of health services and the distribution and use of financial resources.

The demand for health services is materialized in the needs expressed by the population. In order to observe the size of the demand for health services, one must analyze

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the demographic and health indicators. There are many factors that can increase the demand, but the most important concern is the aging population.

Competition in the health care market in Romania. Even though there should not be competition between the two sectors, public and private, but complementarity, in fact, unfair competition is brought into discussion. Because of the reduced allocation of sums of money to the health system, public health units cannot purchase equipment and raw materials needed for service delivery. Often, patients must procure medicines, bandages, syringes etc., which obliges them to turn to services provided by private hospitals.

„One notes that there are significant differences between the two health systems. What is common concerns the interest for maximum results. One must admit that both systems offer outstanding performance, but, overall, the patient satisfaction, the medical staff satisfaction and care services policy differ. When referring to quality on all possible facets, of course one addresses the private medicine. When referring to addressability and the right to care one looks into the state. The two systems must coexist, currently this being the most reasonable formula to streamline and increase quality in the Romanian health system” [3].

2. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PATIENT SATISFACTION IN DR. ENESCU MEDICAL CLINIC AND GAESTI TOWN HOSPITAL

2.1. Research methodology

In order to identify the satisfaction of medical services user of both public and private sectors, one intended to realize a survey among patients of the two analyzed medical units. The survey aimed to find out the degree of patient satisfaction in the Dr. Enescu Medical Center compared to the Hospital in Găești and was conducted between October 15 to November 15, 2016.

The instrument used was the questionnaire which included 17 questions, of which 13 closed, two open and two mixed. The method of information collection was simple, random. The sample is not representative (this was not the purpose of the poll) because time and financial resources have disabled a large survey. 110 questionnaires were divided, but the number of respondents was 102: Clients of the Dr. Enescu Medical Centre and of the Town Hospital in Gaesti (the research unit). The studied unit was represented by the totality of patients in Găești town. The central hypothesis was that "Dr. Enescu Medical Center meets consumer needs".

The objectives (O) of the research were:

- finding satisfaction in patients of the two medical units;
- benchmarking the medical staff performance of the two health centers;
- patient general impressions about the two analyzed hospitals.

2.2. Comparative analysis: results and interpretations

O₁ : finding satisfaction in patients of the two medical units

For this purpose were addressed questions related to: the assessment of medical services offered by the two units and assessment of information received as a patient in terms of quality and clarity of information. To make a comparison of the services offered by the public and private sectors, respondents were asked a question related to the appreciation of a medical institute from the private hospitals: Dr. Enescu Medical Centre and the assessment of Găești Hospital. One analyzed five services of both units: sampling analysis, medical skills, friendliness of staff, diversity of services, the time allotted by the medical staff to each patient.

Table 1. Patients' assessment of the services provided by the two medical units

Unit	Service	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither, nor	Dissatisfied	Most dissatisfied	Overall score [%]
Dr. Enescu Medical Centre	- sampling analysis	82	18	-	-	-	4.82
	- medical skills	74	26	-	-	-	4.73
	- friendliness of staff	67	33	-	-	-	4.66
	- diversity of services	75	25	-	-	-	4.75
	- time allotted by the medical staff to each patient	62	38	-	-	-	4.61
TOTAL Dr. Enescu Medical Centre							4.71
Găești Town Hospital	- sampling analysis	16	25	33	21	5	3.26
	- medical skills	58	36	3	2	1	4.48
	- friendliness of staff	10	5	19	35	31	2.26
	- diversity of services	30	16	19	33	2	3.39
	- time allotted by the medical staff to each patient	-	-	18	38	44	1.73
TOTAL Găești Town Hospital							3.02

Reference: authors' processing

It is noted that, for all provided services, Dr. Enescu Medical Center is preferred by patients, recording a score of 4.71, while Găești Town Hospital totaled a score of 3.02 points out of a possible of 5 points.

$$\text{Overall score Dr. Enescu Medical Centre} = (4.82+4.73+4.66+4.75+4.61)/5=4.71$$

$$\text{Overall Score Găești Town Hospital} = (3.26+4.48+2.26+3.39+1.73)/5=3.02$$

Another question which meets this objective is related to the quality and limpidity of the information submitted by the analyzed health units. The results obtained are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Patients' assessment of the quality and comprehensiveness of the information provided by the two medical units.

Unit	Service	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither, nor	Dissatisfied	Most dissatisfied	Overall score [%]
Dr. Enescu Medical Centre	-information quality	59	41	-	-	-	4.50
	-limpidity of information	69	26	5	-	-	4.37
TOTAL Dr. Enescu Medical Center							4.44
Găești Town Hospital	-information quality	-	-	17	42	41	1.73
	-limpidity of information	-	-	7	38	55	1.51
TOTAL Găești Town Hospital							1.62

Reference: authors' processing

In Găești Town Hospital, the medical staff do not communicate with the patients, they often do not even know their diagnosis. Therefore, the score recorded for quality of information transmitted to patients in the hospital in Găești is 1.73, indicating their discontent. For clarity of the information transmitted, the patients of the Dr. Enescu Medical Centre showed satisfied, the score being 4.37, while for the hospital, the score was 1.51. Overall, the private sector (score 4.44) exceeds once again the public sector (1.62).

O₂: benchmarking the medical staff performance of the two health centers

To achieve this objective, interviewees answered questions related to: the assessment of doctors in terms of their training and in terms of the performance, perception of the cleanliness of Dr. Enescu Medical Centre compared to the public sector, the waiting time until the medical examination, appreciation of services provided by the nurses, confidence in sterilizing the instruments.

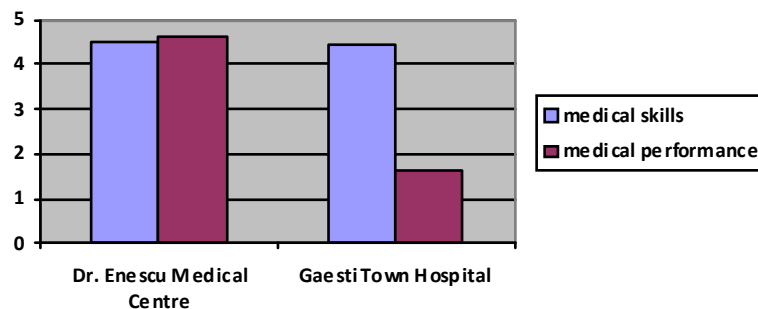


Figure 1. Comparative analysis of Dr. Enescu Medical Centre and Găești Town Hospital in terms of medical skills and medical performance.

Reference: authors`processing

The performance of physicians in Dr. Enescu Medical Centre was appreciated by those surveyed with a score of 4.63, which means their total satisfaction. Doctors at the center are very well trained and come from hospitals in Targoviste and Bucharest. In the hospital, doctors obtained a performance score of 1.64. Correlated with their skills (score 4.48), one can note the fact that, although doctors have the skills to properly treat patients, however, they fail to have the performance desired by the patient. The causes are personal, and professional: on the one hand material shortcomings, and secondly crowd of patients and lack of staff (Fig. 1). Regarding the cleanliness in the Dr. Enescu Medical Center, the score was 4.78, distributed as follows: cleanliness in surgeries 4.72; cleanliness in toilets 4.78; cleanliness in the waiting room 4.83. Within Găești Town Hospital, cleanliness is poor, again the lack of staff leads to complaints from patients. Besides the cleanliness which should be maintained, facilities are not in good working order. Thus, the obtained overall score for cleanliness is 2.16: cleanliness in the surgeries 2.21; cleanliness in toilets 1.91; cleanliness in the waiting room 2.37 (Fig. 2).

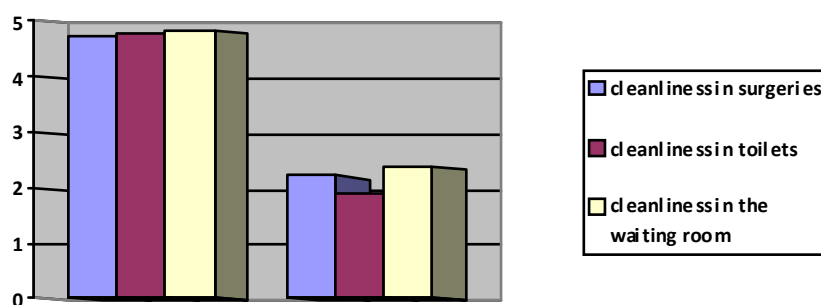


Figure 2. Comparative analysis of the Dr. Enescu Medical Centre and the Găești Town Hospital in terms of cleanliness.

Reference: authors`processing

For Dr. Enescu Medical Center, the waiting time is reduced because patients arrive here only on the basis of appointments which are based on the patient need. Unscheduled persons are allowed only if scheduled patients agree to be delayed in their consult or at the end of the programme. The score obtained for the waiting time until the patient is dealt with by health professionals is 4.82, patients being very satisfied. In the hospital, endless queues, long waits for patients, made the score obtained to be 1.48, respondents were very dissatisfied.

Also to make a comparison of the public and private sector, we analyzed the courtesy of the nurses in the Dr. Enescu Medical Center and Găești Town Hospital. Within the center, the courtesy of nurses registered a score of 4.68, patients being very satisfied, they are always smiling, friendly, and they possess an excellent knowledge of their job. For Găești Town Hospital, the courtesy of nurses registered a score of 1.62, which means dissatisfaction of respondents. In the public sector, nurses considered themselves to be more important than doctors, it goes as far as they schedule who they wish, they give preference to certain persons etc.

As regards the sterilization of the instruments, the trust patients granted was equal for both hospitals. For the Dr. Enescu Medical Center, 81% responded that they trust, while 19% said they do not trust the sterilization of the instruments. For the hospital / clinic in Găești the score is similar, even identical, 80% of patients say they trust the sterilization of the instruments, and 20% do not offer trust, probably due to situations related to patients illnesses after treatment in hospital, whose causes shall be deemed to not sterilized instruments.

O₃ : patient general impressions about the two analyzed medical units

The vast majority of respondents (92%) said they would come again to be treated at the center, while 8% say they will not return for unknown reasons. Respondents were asked what their general impression about Dr. Enescu Medical Center was. They answered: 25% did not want to answer; 22% believe that the staff is friendly; 20% believe that the staff are competent; 19% said that waiting time is reduced; 14% are satisfied with the speed of service.

In the Town Hospital in Găești, respondents asserted, in a proportion of 22% that staff is insufficient, 21% say that maintaining cleanliness is poor, 16% say that the staff did not empathize with patients, 9% think that hospital staff are competent, and 32% did not want to answer.

The respondent profile is: female person over the age of 57, with incomes between 900-1200 lei, employee, who attended a university.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Comparing both the public and the private sectors: Dr. Enescu Medical Center and Găești Hospital, it comes out that there are major differences between the two hospitals, from cleanliness to doctors performance. The analysis was performed for similar services only, excluding other services. Thus, one ascertained the following:

- the hypothesis was confirmed and the objectives were achieved;
- patients' option for the private sector is not related to doctors' skills, because the scores for this point was similar for both analyzed sites;
- from congestion, the nurses' courtesy in Găești Town Hospital is unsatisfactory;
- pensioners can not afford to bear the high cost of private services, so they turn to state services even if the waiting time is longer;
- the poor quality and comprehensibility of the information transmitted in Găești Town Hospital leads patients to renounce to its services;

- the doctors` conduct within Găești Town Hospital is inferior to that in Dr. Enescu Medical Center due to lack of time and overload;
- the patients` general impression of the Dr. Enescu Medical Center is that: the staff is friendly, swift, competent, and the standby time until the patient takeover is reduced;
- the patients` general impression regarding the Hospital in Găești is: the staff do not empathize with the patients, the staff is competent but insufficient and the cleanliness is unsatisfactory.

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