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Research Article

Medical Research

### Study of working of outdoor patient department (OPD) in a setup of rural back ground hospital of northern India

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#### ABSTRACT

It is submitted that Health is a priority agenda of the state. Our emphasis is to provide quality health care to the community, especially the underserved and under privileged segment of the society, at an affordable cost. Outdoor patient department (OPD) acts as a window to hospital services and a patient's impression of the hospital begins at the OPD. This impression often influences the patient's sensitivity to the hospital and therefore it is essential to ensure that OPD services provide an excellent experience. It is also well establish that 8-10% of OPD patient need hospitalization.[1] It should be well organized to avoid confusion and frustration and also regulate the flow of inpatients to the hospital. This research study was designed with the intention of generating feedback information in functioning of OPD of the selected general hospital in providing patient's satisfaction. Also for the effective functioning of OPD, the opinion of both patient and consultants are of immense importance for any organization.

**Keywords:** Health; hospital; outdoor patient department; indoor; hospitalization; feedback.

#### INTRODUCTION

The outpatient department is a very important wing of the hospital which is visited by a large section of the community. This is the first place where the sick and their relatives come in direct contact with the hospital and its staff. The care and attention provided to them goes a long way in building up the reputation and confidence of the people in the hospital. It is here that human relation skill of the hospital staffs are taxed to the maximum. As such the public relation functions of the OPD are of utmost important. The staff working there has to be specially selected and trained to be polite, cheerful, co-operative and efficient and last but not the least practical. Treating

out patient is an operation research concerned with activities of doctors of various specialties to improve beneficial changes in the patient treatment and working condition. However, systematic and frequent evaluation is essential to provide feedback information to the management authorities for future planning in the hospital. The functioning of the present study would serve as guideline information for future improvement, modification, knowledge, programme, use of facilities, and optimum utilization of human and material resources in the services of community for providing effective satisfaction for the patient in the OPD of various departments. Hence the present study was taken up in the setup of medical college hospital (Khanpur kalan, Haryana) of rural

back ground. Khanpur Kalan is predominantly inhabited by people from the Yaduvanshi Ahirs and Jats who belong to the Hindu faith. Their social customs are heavily influenced by Arya Samaj, as propagated by Swami Dayanand. They are skilled agriculturists and have many gotras. Medical college hospital is the main health care institution in a state. Being a referral institution, data reveals that more than 50% of all the OPD patients and 70% of casualty/IPD patients in a district and surrounding areas come to the hospital. The hospital includes viz- Surgeries, Medicines, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Pediatrics, Orthopedics, ENT, Ophthalmology, Dermatology, Anesthesiology, Pathology, Microbiology, Radiology, Physiotherapy and Casualty with various Para clinical departments like Biochemistry, Radio-Diagnostics, Pathology, Microbiology, Physiotherapy etc. Like any other hospitals, medical college hospital gets maximum number of outpatients from various sources of origin and it is witnessing increased number of outpatients in OPD, day by day.

## AIM AND OBJECTIVE

- To study the functioning and problems of OPD service areas in the medical college hospital set up and to seek the feedback from the OPD patients (health care seekers) regarding the existing facilities, functioning style and needs.
- To collect the information from doctors on problems in caring the outpatients and suggestions for improvements and to assess the patients satisfaction about the services offered by the hospital.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Outpatient departments (OPD's) are the backbone of any hospital as maximum number of patients is treated on daily basis. An effort has been made through the present study to explore the opinion of both patients and treating doctors. The methodology adopted for the study is discussed under the following headings:

### Research Design

The exploratory research was conducted for the present investigation. A survey was conducted to collect the required data from the selected sample.

### Location of the Study

The study was carried out in medical college hospital in a rural back ground which is a multi-specialty centre.

### Variables of the Study

Variables of two types were considered, viz., Independent variables, such as patients and doctors and dependent variables like various clinical and para clinical departments in treating out patients.

### Sample Selection

Random purposive sampling technique was adopted for the selection of sample. Doctors of various clinical departments and patients attending OPD's were considered as respondents of the study. A sample of minimum 25 doctors and 250 patients were chosen. Doctor respondents who are serving in medical college hospital were considered as sample and patients who have visited OPD's of medical college hospital more than once were included as sample for the study. The study was carried out in the outpatient departments.

### Research Tool

Pre tested questionnaire with open and closed questions was used as research tool to collect the data. Keeping in view of the objectives and variables, the questionnaire was prepared which focused in two parts. Performa-I was used to collect information from doctors. It consists of questions on personal, professional details and opinion and suggestions. Performa-II was used for patients who focused on questions on personal details, history of illness, problems, opinion on facilities and functioning of various clinical departments.

### Method of Data Collection

With a brief introduction to the study, willing participants to the study were considered and Proforma-1 was administered to doctors. About a week time was given to complete the questionnaire. Finally all 25 doctors returned the filled in Performa with active participation. The patients who have been attending various OPD's more than once were contacted and data was collected by the researcher himself through personal interview and responses

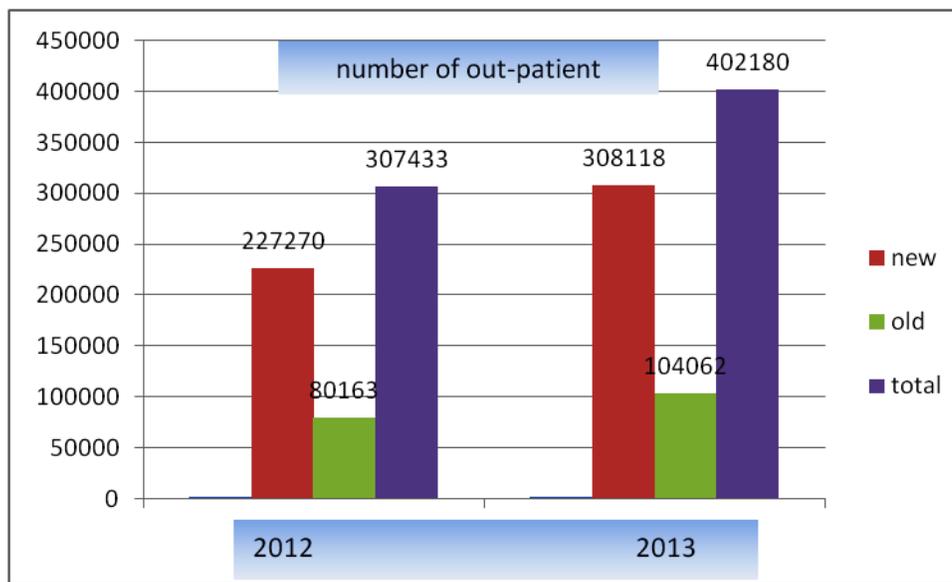
were recorded in Performa-II. The questions were translated to local language to record the information. The data of 250 respondents was collected with the span of 7 to 10 days and thus cooperative and willing participants participated in this study. The data for the present study was collected in the month of Jan 2014.

**Analysis of Data**

The collected data was tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis frequency; Percentages were used to present the data.

**RESULTS**

The data collected on OPD as per the records the statistics for the year-2012 (Jan-Dec) was 3,07,433(old 80,163 new 2,27,270) and 2013(Jan-Dec) was 4,02,180 (old 1,04,062 new 3,08,118). (Fig.-1). Therefore, there was a wide scope to carry out the systematic evaluation of OPD (Outpatient Department) for feedback information, which serves as a guideline for effective, efficient and satisfactory service to the outpatients. The data collected on OPD as per record the statistics for the year clinical departments in treating outpatients in OPDs is presented in this section under 2 headings. Section-1 deals with analysis of results of OPD doctors and section-2 presents the analysis of feedback information from out patients.



**Figure 1:** Graphical representation of number of out-patient during 2012-2013 (Jan-Dec)

**Section 1: Result Analysis of Respondent OPD Doctors**

Personal details of doctors working in medical college hospital are presented in Table-1. Table-2 presents the statistical information of out-patients treated in various OPD departments of medical college hospital by a consultant per day. Outpatient department doctor’s opinion regarding the existing facilities in hospital is recorded in Table-3. Regarding co-operation of supporting staff in OPD was found to be good according to 76 % of consultants while 20 % reported average and 4 % reported poor. 60 % of doctors found planning of

OPD was good while 32 % indicated average. Majority of OPD doctors (48 %) have expressed their opinion regarding facilities provided to patient is Average. Problem faced by the doctors in OPD with respect to the patient is represented in the Table no-4.majority of doctors (80 %) was in favour of provision of enquiry window at hospital. A good number of doctors (60 %) had felt that they were overburdened and overcrowding occur during peak OPD time. 44 % of doctors lack skilled attendant in their OPD. A good number of suggestions for effective services to out-patients in OPD are disclosed in Table-5. More than 80 percent of doctors

had suggested establishing an enquiry counter for out-patients on medical, family welfare services, importance of follow-up visits and health education. Majority of OPD doctors (80 %) had suggested that it is essential to screen the patients by the resident doctors before starting of OPD and this will help to send the patients to concerned specialist.

**Section 2: Analysis of Feedback Information from Outpatients**

Table-6 presents the personal details of out-door patients. History of illness of the OPD patients is presented in Table-7. Higher number of patients reported between 7-15 days of illness (60 %). However, they had taken treatment (80 %) from family physicians (MBBS 60 %). It is interesting to note that nearly 80 per cent of patients had visited on their own to medical college hospital. Time spent in various sections via, reception, registration, records, billing, blood drawing and radio-diagnosis by the outpatients are presented in Table-8. It was noticed that 80 % and 76 % of out-patients spent less than 15

minutes in reception and registration section respectively. Interaction between consultants and patients in OPD's is tabulated in Table-9. Briefing about patient illness, various investigation and usage of prescribed medicines was given to more than 90 percent of patients. More than 95 % of patients were briefed about the treatment modality. Patients feedbacks about paramedical departments, 88 percent of them were advised various investigations. A significantly number of patients was referred to biochemistry i.e. 80%, 12% to radiology, 4% to microbiology and 4% to pathology. Regarding getting test reports from above departments and receiving the prescriptions for their ailments, 96 per cent of the patients said that they received them on the same day while 4% of them received on successive OPD's. Table-10 reveals the opinion of outdoor patients regarding fee structure. Level of outpatient's satisfaction regarding services at various sections of hospital and satisfaction about facilities provided in the form of infrastructure is tabulated in Table 11.

**Table 1:** Personal details of the doctors of medical college hospital (N=25)

Details	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age in years	Less than 29	3	12 %
	30 – 40	15	60 %
	40 - 50	7	28 %
Gender	Male	17	68 %
	Female	8	32 %
Marital status	Married	22	88 %
	Unmarried	3	12 %
Place of origin	Urban	23	92 %
	Rural	2	8 %
Educational qualification	MBBS	5	20 %
	PG Diploma	8	32 %
	PG Degree	12	48 %
Earlier experience	Yes	15	60 %
	No	10	40 %

**Table 2:** Details of out-patients treated by an individual doctor per day of medical college hospital (N=25)

Number of Out Patients seen	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 20	5	20 %

20 to 40	4	16 %
More than 40	16	64 %

**Table 3:** Suggestions by the Doctors for effective services to out-patients in OPD's (N=25)

Facilities	Good	Average	Poor
Co-operation of supporting staff	19 (76 %)	5 (20 %)	1(4 %)
Planning of OPD rooms	15 (60 %)	8 (32 %)	4(16 %)
Facilities provided to patients	10(40 %)	12(48 %)	3(12 %)

**Table 4:** Problems faced by the doctors in OPD of medical college hospital (N=25)

Problem	Frequency	Percentage
Number of OPD patients are more to handle for the day	15	60 %
Poor management of crowd of OPD patients	15	60 %
Lack of skilled attendant in OPD	11	44 %
No enquiry counter to guide OPD patients	20	80 %
Poor ventilation of room in OPD	3	12 %
Unavailability of all investigations	5	20 %
No problem	5	20 %

**Table 5:** Suggestions by the Doctors for effective services to out-patients in OPD's of medical college hospital (N=25)

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Enquiry counter to guide OPD patients	20	80 %
Screening of patients by the resident doctors is essential to send them to concerned consultant	20	80 %
Even distribution of OPD to all available consultant	15	60 %
Require skilled/trained attendant	11	44 %
Need of IEC activity about health facilities provided	25	100 %
Media publicity about health facilities provided	16	64 %

**Table 6:** Personal details of the selected outpatients of medical college hospital (N=250)

	Detail	Frequency	Percentage
Age in year	20-30	100	40
	30-40	50	20
	40-50	50	20
	50-60	50	20

Sex	Male	90	36
	Female	160	64
Marital status	Married	200	80
	Unmarried	50	20
Place of origin	Rural	200	80
	Urban	50	20
Religion	Hindu	250	100
	Jain	0	0
	Muslim	0	0
	Christian	0	0
Occupation	Homemaker	160	64
	Agriculturist	40	16
	Businessman	50	20
Education	Illiterate	50	20
	Primary	100	40
	Secondary	100	40

**Table 7:** History of illness of the selected patients (N=250)

History of illness		Frequency	Percentage
Duration of illness	Less than 7 days	60	24
	7-15 days	150	60
	More than 15 days	40	16
Treatment for illness	Yes	200	80
	No	50	20
Treatment taken	MBBS	150	60
	Consultant	50	20
	Others	50	20
Duration of treatment	Less than 7 days	50	20
	7-15 days	150	60
	More than 15 days	50	20
Reference to medical college hospital	Self	200	80
	Family doctor	50	20

**Table 8:** Time spent in various sections at the time of OPD visit by the patient (N=250)

Sections	Time spent in minutes			
	Less than 15	15-30	More than 30	No response
Reception	200(80%)	50(20%)	Nil	Nil
Registration	190(76%)	60(24%)	Nil	Nil
Records	110(44%)	140(56%)	Nil	Nil

Billing	100(40%)	100(40%)	Nil	50(20%)
Radiodiagnosis	110(44%)	90(36%)	50(20%)	Nil

**Table 9:** Interaction between consultants and patients and feedback information about paramedical care

Interacting Details	Response and percentage	
	Yes	No
<b>Interaction between Doctors and patients n25</b>		
Briefing about illness	23(92%)	2(8%)
Briefing about need for investigation	23(92%)	2(8%)
Briefing about treatment modalities	24(96%)	1(4%)
Briefing about prescribed medicines	23(92%)	2(8%)
<b>Para medical Feedback from the patient n250</b>		
Advise of the test to the patient	220(88%)	30(12%)
If Yes, Different department	Bio-chemistry	200(80%)
	Microbiology	100(4%)
	Pathology	10(4%)
	Radiology	30(12%)
Arrival of the test reports	Same day	240(96%)
	Next day	10(4%)
Prescription of Medicine received by patient	Same day	240(96%)
	Next day	10(4%)

**Table 10:** Opinion of OPD patients about the fee structure (N=250)

Fee Structure	Frequency	Percentage
Low	10	4%
Nominal	200	80%
Affordable	30	12%
High	10	4%

**Table 11:** Level of satisfaction of patients regarding services and infrastructure (N=250)

Service	Level of Satisfaction		
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied
Reception	20(8%)	220(88%)	10(4%)
Registration	10(4%)	230(92%)	10(4%)
Records	10(4%)	230(92%)	10(4%)
Nursing staff	Nil	210(84%)	40(16%)
Attenders	10(4%)	210(84%)	30(12%)

Billing	20(8%)	190(76%)	40(16%)
Pharmacy	20(8%)	200(80%)	30(12%)
Laboratory	20(8%)	220(88%)	10(4%)
Radiology	10(4%)	160(64%)	80(32%)
Parking	40(16%)	200(80%)	10(4%)
Cleanliness	40(16%)	200(80%)	10(4%)

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

OPD is defined as a part of the hospital with allotted physical, medical facilities, their staff in sufficient number with regular scheduled hours to provide care for patient who are not registered as inpatient.[2] Vincent and Omachony (1990) defined quality in health-services under the dimension of technical quality and art of treatment.[3] Technical quality is that of diagnosis and cure and artistic side is that offered services meet patient's expectation. For any hospital with the patient/community out-patient services has the wide scope in providing medical services on scheduled and unscheduled basis.[4] In the view of Thimmappaya outpatient department provide an excellent service for providing preventive measures in health, case finding and following care for patients.[5] The OPD interacts with the neighboring department to provide effective health care. OPD is supposed to provide high quality, low cost services to the patient and maintain the harmony between clinical and para-clinical. It aims to hasten the process of examination and refer the patient to concerned specialist to treat appropriately. Periodically survey of outpatient in OPD is required for future development and implementation of changes for better in any hospital. Survey of outpatient provides the feedback information. Not only interaction with OPD patient is important but equally interaction with doctors of OPD will also provide immense help to understand the problems faced by them during OPD and seeking solution to solve the problem for the betterment of OPD Services. Since the scope of OPD are consultation, investigation, procedure, special services, preventive and primitive health care rehabilitation, health education and counseling.[6] The OPD, thus evolved requires an organization with definite procedure and efficient management.

## DISCUSSION

Comfort, care and cure are the expectations of a patient who is in distress at the time of attending an outpatient department. Therefore an attempt is made to carry out the systematic evaluation of OPD's of medical college hospital for feedback information from doctors attending OPD's and out patients. The findings of this study have helped the researcher to interpret and to draw the valuable conclusion and suggestions for future improvement in OPD. Doctors of OPD's in medical college hospital are of good educational background and work experience. Outpatients were both rural (80%) and urban (20%) background; mixed age group with comparatively lower level of education and economical status visit the hospital. Outpatient facilities provide the main linkage of the Hospital with the community and thereby they are becoming more and more important and increase in demand but information on OPD's and inter-departmental relationships are very scanty as not many research studies have been carried out in these areas. Therefore findings of the present study could be of valuable documentation for future guidelines for hospital management and future research. This indicates growing trust and faith of the patients and also the acceptance of the OPD services. This trend suggests the requirement for more number of clinical and supportive staff and additional facilities for future implementation. In the opinion of researcher these parameters which has scored patients satisfaction, positive opinion helps to meet the patient's expectations. Many problems and complaints may be encountered by doctors and patients in functioning of OPD's (Francis 1991). The results of the present study supports above cited author's opinion. Doctors working in OPD's of medical college hospital have identified some of the problems related with the overcrowding of patients.

### **As important solution to these problems doctors have suggested the following**

Scheduled counseling of outpatient on importance of follow-up visits, medical and welfare services and health education is recommended. In the opinion of researcher there should be a proper enquiry counter implemented by the department of public relations or OPD cell through MBBS qualified doctor / Nursing staff / Medical social worker. The PRO/OPD counselor can counsel the outpatients for taking prescribed medicines; importance of follow up visits to OPD's and results for referring to other departments. They can also counsel the outpatients regarding the importance of investigation and radio-diagnostic tests by briefing about the time required for test and arrival of the reports. Thus these measures would help to overcome some of the problems mentioned above by patients and to carry out the suggestions by consultant doctors. Thus, the submission of the researcher about the outcome of the investigation is that, the findings of the study

could be considered as valuable information as a guideline for future planning, functioning and modification in the OPD of future hospitals setup and modification in the existing hospitals. As not many studies are available on OPD the contribution of the study fills the lacunae in the literature on OPD with reference to Indian conditions.

### **CONCLUSION**

Outpatients of medical college hospital, Khanpur Kalan were satisfied with the existing facilities, fee structure, outpatient services and Para clinical facilities. According to doctors of OPD's in medical college hospital, facilities provided to outpatients are good; co-operation of supporting staff needs to be improved. Some of the important and good suggestions given by the doctors attending OPD's for its improvement for better service to the outpatients could be implemented in functional setup of medical college hospital, Khanpur Kalan.

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