

Expatriate patient's satisfaction of healthcare services in the UAE's Private Hospitals

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Date of Submission: 15-11-2024

Date of Acceptance: 25-11-2024

ABSTRACT: Patient satisfaction is the chief parameter for health care services. The UAE receives millions of visitors, tourists every year in addition to its expatriate resident's population of around 88%. The increasing trend of multinational residents makes the necessity of a large number of private hospitals in the UAE. The Private hospitals face challenges in business perspective, economy and customer service. Providing quality healthcare services are mandatory by law and to sustain the healthcare business in the UAE. The patient experience in the hospital needs to be converted into patient satisfaction through providing quality of healthcare services. This study takes an insight of expatriate patients' satisfaction to assess the characteristics of quality healthcare services in the UAE's private hospitals.

Keywords: Patient satisfaction, healthcare service, private hospitals, patient experience quality.

I. INTRODUCTION

Expatriates' population in the UAE is more than 87% in the year 2023. The UAE's geographical, oil and other resources, labor rights, human resource policy, health care, quality lifestyle, job opportunity, work etiquette and multicultural lifestyle attracts more and more expatriate resident population in the country. Expatriate population in the UAE starts from blue collar employees to business tycoons and employees with families. The UAE is a second home for many expatriates. The UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention is continuously monitoring and updates on key policies in the healthcare system and quality of service. The ministry has developed an inclusive policy and system of proficiency in streamlining the involvement of all healthcare institutions. This rationalization includes quality, access and affordability of healthcare as the triad for all the residents of the UAE.

In recent times, the healthcare sector in the UAE has faced unexpected challenges in pandemic and post pandemic. Improving the quality of

hospitals and their service often helps to achieve health-related sustainable development goals, one of the chief objectives of the UAE. The Emirati healthcare system is a mix of both public and private sectors. UAE nationals can get free universal healthcare in all Emirates in government hospitals, and expatriates must take out private insurance to cover their medical expenses.

From the early 2000s the UAE was involved in quality health care systems and policy reforms benefiting the residents. This quality and service focused on the introduction of private health insurance in the country to support the lifestyle of the residents. This became a helping hand for the residents to support the rapid population growth and rising prevalence of disease and risk factors in the country (Koornneef et al., 2017). Later health insurance became compulsory for all employees in the UAE. The companies recruiting employees must provide health insurance to all employees and families.

Fast-growing expatriate population created the need for more private hospitals in the UAE. The health service is very expensive and the insurance coverage became essential care. The insurance coverage, plans and limitations vary company to company and based on the designation and grades of the employees. Nowadays health insurance has become mandatory for the travelers and visitors of the UAE.

Customer satisfaction is the ultimatum for any business, and for health service patient satisfaction is the chief parameter. Many countries in the world are still struggling to meet the expected international standards in the health care system. The reports on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) confirmed the failure of healthcare systems in countries that have increased the cost of health care. More than thirty countries have had a steep surge in medical expenses during the past 10 years (OECD, 2012). The health care Costs associated with poor quality and medical errors. The Ministry of Economy in the UAE is expecting 16% annual

growth in the health care sector and the economy will surge in billions. The WHO (World Health Organization) report of 2015 confirmed that the UAE has earned its own reputation in quality of healthcare and is still interested in developing further to meet the international quality standards (Younies et al. 2016).

Undoubtedly, private hospitals in the UAE are well-equipped with specialized doctors in all disciplines with world class healthcare service with sophisticated technology. This service, facility, specialized doctors and technologically updated facilities attracts the patients towards UAE for their healthcare visits and medical Tourism (Lukman Olorogun, 2017). Currently the UAE has become the leading medical tourism hub in the GCC for the MENA region.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The need for private hospitals in the UAE started in 1990's as the expat population in the country was rapidly increasing about 19 % annually. There was a huge amount of floating and travelers, visitors from all around the world cost UAE very high in the health sector. The UAE struggled a lot to provide a quality healthcare system in public and private hospitals due to the crowded population. The UAE framed new healthcare policy and opened room for private hospitals and moved towards benchmarking the healthcare quality to meet out the medical tour standards and facility in the UAE (Lukman, 2017). The increased number of private health care systems supported a surge in job markets, associated business units, and countries' economy to 11%. The multi-level benefits and the quality concerns of the UAE's vision and mission, the ministry of health introduced health reforms and policies for the residents of UAE and tourists. That is also at par with JCI maneuvers to cope up with UAE's health standards and vision 2030. (Immanuel Azad Moonesar 2016). Accordingly, the health care economy plays the role of a non-oil economy to the country (Redwanur Rahman,2021).

The UAE is keen on quality healthcare service in all government and private hospitals. To ensure the same hospitals are directed to get accredited with the concerned international body Joint Commission of International Accreditation standards for Hospitals (JCI). The JCI standards promise to improve the process of infection control, good communication among health care staff and Nursing care. Cleanliness and quality of nursing were important predictors for patient experience as per JCI. Researchers of JCI have

submitted in the London Medical Institute conference focused on patient experience concentrating patients' value. However, healthcare providers need to take this step further and design healthcare service with patients for patients method (Subashnie , 2014). Accreditation helps to ensure the service quality and patient care. The accreditation gives a positive impact on hospitals either public or private and leads to attracting patients with confidence. The enhanced quality of service and care in hospitals, patients' safety and affordability and better health outcomes are promising and give a satisfying approach to the patients (Ghada Ali Al Mohammed, 2019).

An empirical study conducted in the UAE about the quality of healthcare service in private and public hospitals justifies that the current growth of medical care in the UAE is a direct result of the best practices adopted by the private hospitals. And the fact that achieving the recognition of "Best medical Tourism Hub" relies on the international visitor's rate. Most of the medical tourists sought treatment in the private hospitals across the country who were willing to pay for excellent patient care services and ready to return for subsequent treatments in the future (Lukman Olorogun, 2017). Improving the quality of hospitals, service often helps to achieve healthcare sustainable development goals.

The reformation in the UAE's health sector is significant after the JCI accreditation process. The rapid development of private hospitals boomed after the separation of planning and supervisory responsibilities from provider functions. It is difficult to conclude that the UAE has achieved health reforms in the short period with medical tourism and other such facilities. But it is a positive indication including the high patient satisfaction, increasing coverage of JCI and International medical tourism patients are evidencing the same (Koornneef et al., 2017). The Quality of nursing care is precious in the healthcare industry especially in private hospitals. The prime factor of Patient satisfaction relies on nursing care and hospital quality health service and the same may be affected by number of factors and particularly in Islamic countries (Salman Alsaqri, 2016)

Confidence level of patients in hospital's care improves word of mouth recommendations and brings reputation, business and profits. A well-equipped hospital with more personalized patient care improves customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and ultimately patient's happiness. This happiness shows evidence that special care taken

by the hospital ensures quality of health care service (Mohsin Malik, 2016). The main reason for obtaining and evaluating the patients' satisfaction is to highlight the quality and service aspects of the hospital being appreciated and considered by the patients. Patients feedback and evaluation is "a process and an attitude" and thus, patient happiness levels have to be checked on a regular basis and also weighed at regular intervals (Ahmed Al jneibi 2020). The key factors involved in patient satisfaction in the health sectors of UAE are affordability, quality, accessibility and responsiveness dimensions of health care (Hameedah Sayani1, 2023).

The quality of healthcare service of the UAE resident's satisfaction is based on the five factors tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The service quality plays the pivotal role in patient satisfaction in the UAE (Hajar Al Hubaishi, 2022). A patient's experience in a hospital includes, starting from the attendant in parking, receptionist, station nurses, doctors, procedure room facility, labs and cafeteria workers and including housekeeping. A patient can show his/her dissatisfaction with any of these. Even a hospital employee's behavior or communication can impact negatively with patient's feedback and evaluation about the health service. Hence, operational excellence of hospitals in the UAE is promisingly important (Muhammad Usman Tariq 2021). As for private hospitals, the structural and qualitative characteristics of hospitals have a significant impact on patients' satisfaction along with cost of hospitalization or treatment become the predictors for patient satisfaction (Rina Hoxha 2019).

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Satisfaction is meeting the needs and wants of the end users. For many years patient satisfaction has been a major objective of the healthcare sector. Since it has been considered to affect patient retention rate, hospital's market share and reputation. Therefore, achieving a high level of patient satisfaction in the healthcare service is important. It is important for every healthcare system to be aware of their holistic healthcare service, performance and progress through patient satisfaction and comparative analysis in order to sustain a competitive healthcare market.

The UAE's population is highly skewed towards expats and it is surging to 88 % in recent years. This huge volume of population depends on health insurance policies to meet their necessary medical issues. There are many Insurance companies that offer a variety of policies based on the customer's income and nationality and access to a variety of private hospitals.

Emirati patients prefer to visit government hospitals and they get all treatment and benefits, but few of them visit private hospitals occasionally. But expat residents are fully dependent on private healthcare systems from any emergency to normal or casual visits. And almost all the expat residents are having health insurance cards mandatorily.

Hospitals are bound to accept Insurance cards per norms and criteria. The UAE has more than 120 nation's expat residents, visitors and tourists across the world. The main objective of this study is to understand the Expat patient's satisfaction of UAE's private hospitals' services. Hence, the following propositions re made:

- Measuring Expat residents' satisfaction on healthcare services in Private Hospitals.
- Determining the relationship between healthcare service quality and residents' satisfaction.
- Looking insight for the influencing factors of patients' satisfaction

IV. MATERIAL AND METHODS

A Pilot study was conducted using a set of questionnaires, and respondents were requested to provide the details of their satisfaction levels of health service in private hospitals. This survey was conducted in all seven emirates of the UAE's private hospitals ranging from clinics, through star rated hospitals. Government hospital and Emirati members were exempted from this survey. A simple random sampling technique was used to collect the sample data. The hospitals and patents both were chosen randomly. Also, we used language assistance wherever required. Data Analysis is presented below. Alternative medicines like Homeo, Unani, Chinese and other such medical clinics as well as Physiotherapy centers and other similar activities are not included. Data analysis for a sample of size 224 is presented below

4.1 Data Analysis.

1) Nationality /Ethnicity

| Nationality | Arabs | | Non- Arabs | | | | | Total |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------------------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | GCC | Non- GCC | Indian Subcontinent | African | European / UK | US/ English | Others Asian | |
| Freq. | 12 | 22 | 99 | 41 | 15 | 14 | 21 | 224 |
| % | 5.4% | 9.8% | 44.2% | 18.3% | 6.7% | 6.3% | 9.4% | 100% |

More than 120 nationalities are in the UAE as visitors and residents. Hence, for convenience the countries are pooled according to ethnicity and continental.

2) Gender

| Gender | Male | Female | Total |
|-----------|-------|--------|-------|
| Frequency | 170 | 54 | 224 |
| % | 75.9% | 24.1% | 100 % |

3) Age of Patients (in Years)

| Age (in Years) | Below 18 | 19 – 25 | 26-35 | 36-45 | 46-55 | 55 Above | Total |
|----------------|----------|---------|-------|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| Freq. | 42 | 19 | 33 | 65 | 44 | 21 | 224 |
| % | 18.8% | 8.5% | 14.7% | 29.0% | 19.6% | 9.4% | 100 % |

*For below 18 years parents/ guardians were included in survey to respond.

4) Emirate of residence

| Emirate | Abu Dhabi | Ajman | Dubai | Fujairah | Ras Al Khaima | Sharjah | Umm Al Quwain | Total |
|-----------|-----------|-------|-------|----------|---------------|---------|---------------|-------|
| Frequency | 33 | 23 | 78 | 18 | 18 | 39 | 15 | 224 |
| % | 14.7% | 10.3% | 34.8% | 8.0% | 8.0% | 17.4% | 6.7% | 100% |

5) Visited Hospital for whom

| Visited | For kids (below 18 years) | For Self | For Family members | Total |
|-----------|---------------------------|----------|--------------------|--------|
| Frequency | 63 | 125 | 36 | 224 |
| % | 28.1% | 55.8% | 16.1% | 100.0% |

6) Employment Status

| Employment Status | Public Sector | Private Sector | Family Businesses | Self-employed (including freelancers) | Student | Unemployed | Traveler / Visitor | Total |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|------------|--------------------|--------|
| Freq. | 39 | 60 | 21 | 25 | 49 | 7 | 23 | 224 |
| % | 17.4% | 26.8% | 9.4% | 11.2% | 21.9% | 3.1% | 10.3% | 100.0% |

7) Level of Education

| Education | Doctorate (Ph.D.) | Master's degree | Bachelor's Degree | Secondary | Others | Total |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|--------|--------|
| Frequency | 5 | 35 | 99 | 59 | 26 | 224 |
| % | 2.2% | 15.6% | 44.2% | 26.3% | 11.6% | 100.0% |

Almost two third of the private hospital patients are having at least a college degree education or more. Remaining one third of the population falls in education level secondary or below due to a greater number of student community and blue color labor force. Indeed, education is being acknowledged as making a significant impact in patients' awareness about quality of health service. High scores on quality of

health care services are regularly related with lower levels of education. (De Costa et. Al 1999., Danielsen et al., 2007 and Findik et al., 2007). Similarly, the patients with higher education level are more discriminating compared to the patients with lower level of education. In addition, patient experience will be lower for these highly educated patients. The exposure and self-opinions disturb hospital experience and patient satisfaction.

8) Monthly Household Income (in AED)

| Income (in AED) | 0 - 5000 | 5001 - 10000 | 10001 - 15000 | 15001 - 20000 | 20001 - 30000 | 30001 - 40000 | 40001 - 50000 | Above 50000 | Total |
|-----------------|----------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------|
| Frequency | 61 | 77 | 43 | 19 | 11 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 224 |
| % | 27% | 34% | 19% | 8% | 5% | 3% | 2% | 1% | 100% |

9) Type of Insurance Plans Held

| Type of Plan | Individual Plans | Family Plan | Group Plans I | Group Plans II | Traveler Plans | Other | Total |
|--------------|------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------|-------|
| Freq. | 21 | 22 | 85 | 60 | 24 | 12 | 224 |
| % | 9.4% | 9.8% | 37.9% | 26.8% | 10.7% | 5.4% | 100% |

Health insurance is mandatory for every individual in the UAE, either an employee, or family dependents, business people and travelers. But the coverage of diseases, benefits and limitations vary in insurance plans Hence, all the

patients visiting hospitals may need to pay for bills either partially ranging from 10% to 50% or sometimes null based on their plan and illness. People who have a full coverage plan can walk through easily.

10) Regular Family Doctor/ General Practitioner

| Regular Doctor | Yes | No | Total |
|----------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Freq. | 110 | 114 | 224 |
| % | 49.1% | 50.9% | 100.0% |

Almost half of the patients visit the hospital to meet general practitioners and or family doctors. Most first-time visitors reach a general

practitioner then are directed to meet other specialists.

11) Preferably going backhome for furthermedical consultation and treatment

| Going back home | Yes | No | Total |
|-----------------|------|-------|--------|
| Frequency | 20 | 204 | 224 |
| % | 8.9% | 91.1% | 100.0% |

The UAE hospitals are well equipped with modern medical facilities and specialist doctors available round the clock. And most of the medical insurance plan covers many diseases including chronic cases. So, people get treatment well. But,

few of them around nine percent of people go back home to continue treatments for various reasons like family, financial situation, family support, post treatment medication and follow ups, delayed ailments etc.

12) Visiting this hospital(where survey is conducted)

| Visiting this hospital | First time | Already visited | Total |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------|
| Frequency | 33 | 191 | 224 |
| % | 14.7% | 85.3% | 100.0% |

Every business is willing to retain customers including health care. Quality is the prime focus on health service in private hospitals in the UAE. Retention rate of patients is a kind of

business and acknowledged for quality, service and patient satisfaction. Eighty five percent of patients visit the same hospital again for follow ups and treatment and/ the next time when they need it.

13) In-patient orout-patient (on Today)

| Patient Type | In Patient | Out Patient | Total |
|--------------|------------|-------------|--------|
| Freq. | 35 | 189 | 224 |
| % | 15.6% | 84.4% | 100.0% |

14.(a) Ever been hospitalized as In-patient

| No. of days | One day* | 1-2 days | 2-3 days | 3-5 days | More than 5 days | Total |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------------|--------|
| Freq. | 36 | 90 | 43 | 42 | 13 | 224 |
| % | 16.1% | 40.2% | 19.2% | 18.8% | 5.8% | 100.0% |

Mean = 2.3482 Median = 1.8444

* One day inclusive of at least 4 hours spent in hospital of any procedures.

The number of days a patient stays in hospitals is always an important question. Apart from business and affordability, the longer duration of hospitalization disturbs the patient's mental health and reputation of hospitals too. Around 46 percent of patients left the hospital in less than two days. And another twenty percent of patients took a

day extra stay in the hospital. The longer duration of more than five days in hospital stay is around six percent only in private hospitals in the UAE. The **mean** number of days of hospitalization is 2.3482, almost two and half days that is less than three days. And the **median** (middle value) of Inpatients is 1.8444 approximately two days.

14. b) In Patient - Reason for Hospitalization

| No. of days | Surgical | Medical | Maternity | Emergency | Total |
|-------------|----------|---------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Freq. | 23 | 124 | 40 | 37 | 224 |
| % | 10.3% | 55.4% | 17.9% | 16.5% | 100.0% |

There are four major reasons for being hospitalized or in-patient. Firstly, emergency care patients are directly taken to the procedure room and will be shifted further for expert opinion, hospitalization, any lab testing and follow ups. Secondly, maternity is mandatory hospitalization for a minimum of two to three days or up to five

days based on the labor ward reports and patients' health conditions. When it comes to surgery, hospital stay is inevitable for at least three to five days and beyond it depends on case to case. But records show that Mostly hospitalization happened due to emergency and critical care, sometimes due to additional diagnostic procedures.

15) Transferred from another hospital

| Transferred | Yes | No | Total |
|-------------|------|-------|--------|
| Freq. | 17 | 207 | 224 |
| % | 7.6% | 92.4% | 100.0% |

Most patients will get proper treatment within the hospital they visited itself, but in some cases, patients were transferred from one hospital to another for various reasons. Few are

- Insurance policy acceptance issues in that particular hospital

- Patient voluntarily asked or forced to transfer to another hospital for convenience.
- Affordability when they were paying for bills(partially)
- Non- availability of specialist doctors or operation theater or unavailability of specific facility in that particular hospital.

16) Number of times hospitalized (IP) in the past 12 months

| Hospitalization | Nil | One | Two | Three | More | Total |
|-----------------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|--------|
| Freq. | 169 | 45 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 224 |
| % | 75.4% | 20.1% | 2.2% | 2.2% | 0.0% | 100.0% |

17) Number of times visited hospital (OP) in the last 12 months

| Hospital visited | Nil* | One | Two | Three | More | Total |
|------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Freq. | 3 | 32 | 73 | 66 | 50 | 224 |
| % | 1.3% | 14.3% | 32.6% | 29.5% | 22.3% | 100.0% |

*Did not visit for self

Service excellence in healthcare is mandatory and there are four key parameters that decide the same: quality, accessibility and

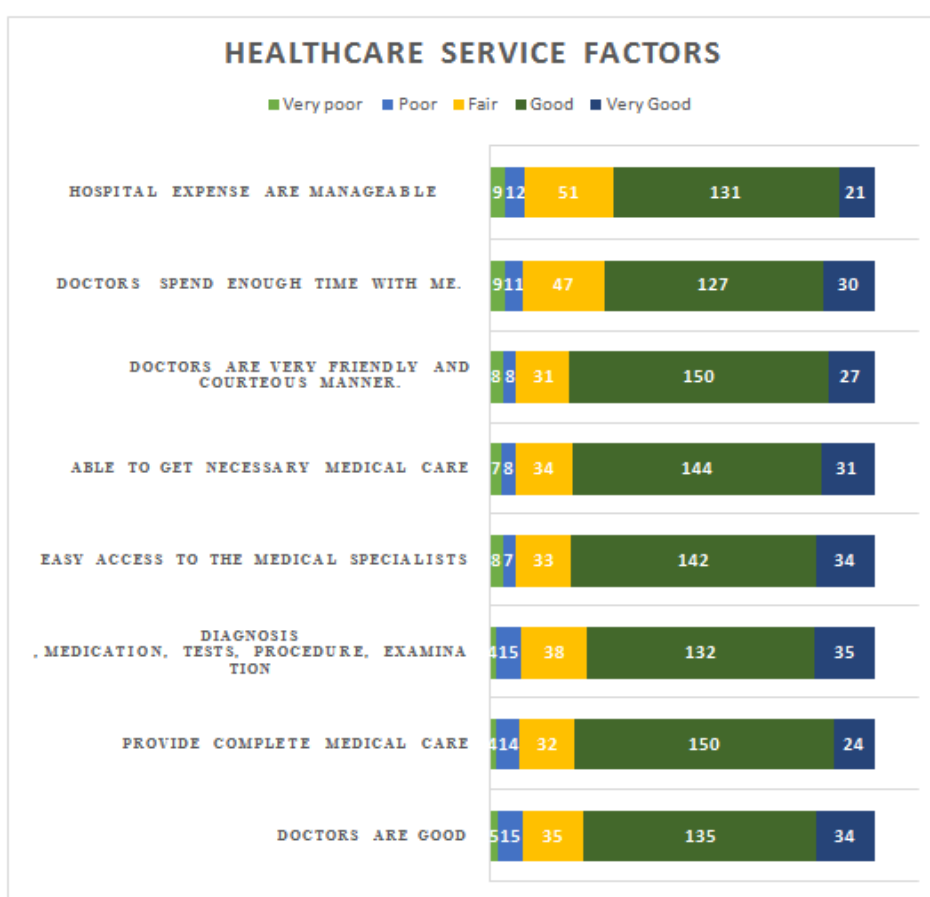
approachability, responsiveness, and affordability. These four key parameters are analyzed using a five-point Likert scale through their characteristics and results are tabulated.

| Healthcare Services Factors | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------|------|------|-----------|------------|---------|
| Scale | Very poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good | Mean | SD |
| 18) Quality | | | | | | | |
| a) Doctors are good | 5 | 15 | 35 | 135 | 34 | 3.79464286 | 0.85902 |
| b) provide complete medical care | 4 | 14 | 32 | 150 | 24 | 3.78571429 | 0.78585 |
| c) Diagnosis, Medication, Tests, Procedure, Examination | 4 | 15 | 38 | 132 | 35 | 3.79910714 | 0.84694 |
| 19) Access and Approachability | | | | | | | |
| a) Easy access to the medical specialists | 8 | 7 | 33 | 142 | 34 | 3.83482143 | 0.8494 |
| b) Able to get necessary medical care | 7 | 8 | 34 | 144 | 31 | 3.82142857 | 0.82792 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|----|----|-----|----|------------|---------|
| c) Doctors are very friendly and courteous manner. | 8 | 8 | 31 | 150 | 27 | 3.80357143 | 0.82928 |
| 20) Responsiveness | | | | | | | |
| a) Doctors spend enough time with me. | 9 | 11 | 47 | 127 | 30 | 3.70535714 | 0.90478 |
| 21) Affordability | | | | | | | |
| a) Hospital expense are manageable | 9 | 12 | 51 | 131 | 21 | 3.63839286 | 0.8775 |

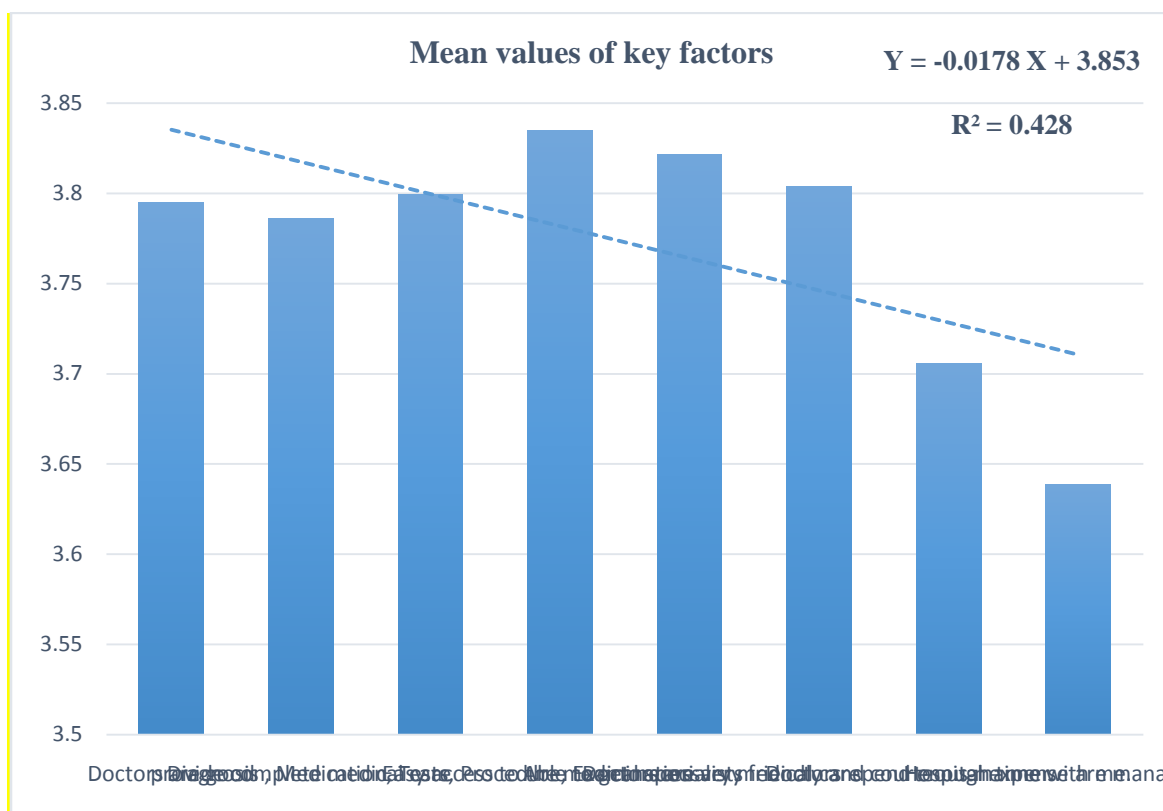
Eight different characteristics were analyzed under the four major key health service factors. All ten

characteristics are positively skewed, evidencing that health services are fairly good.



As far as quality is concerned primarily the doctors then complete the medication facility and thirdly, accessory services like diagnosis, lab-tests, pharmacy, procedure, and examination are pooled and found all the three parameters having

similar feedback scores. Nine to ten percent of patients showed unhappiness with the qualified aspects of the hospitals. Rest all 90 percent patients are happy customers.



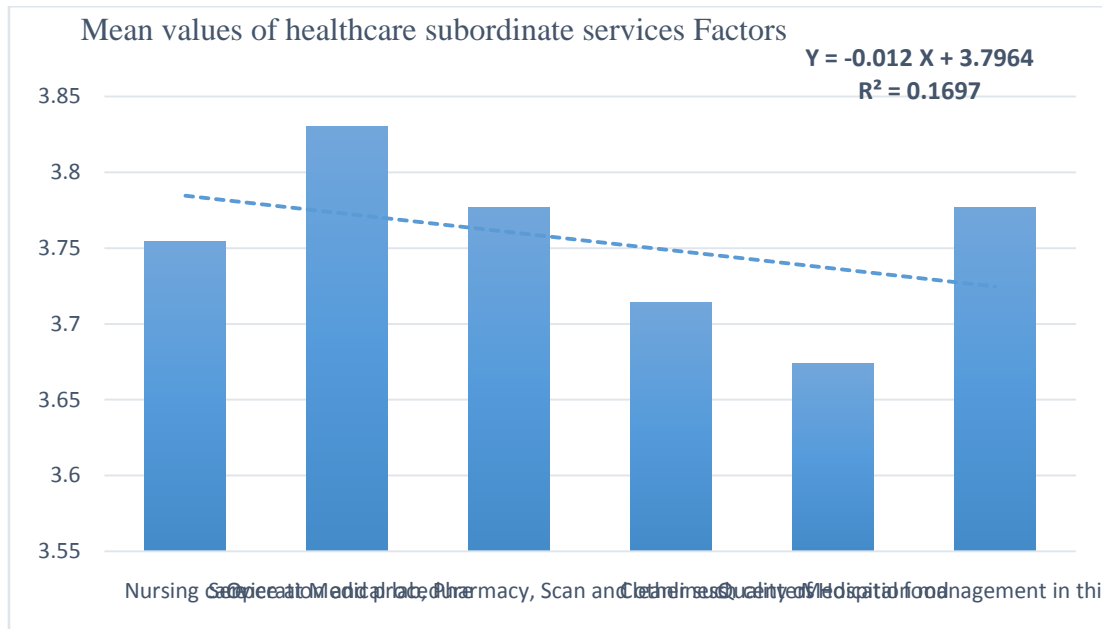
Doctors spending time with patients shows the least mean value 3.63, whereas easy access to medical care shows the highest mean value of 3.83. Range of Mean values is 0.20 only, showing all characteristics are parameters closely associated. The mean values show 76 %

positivity implies three fourth of the service quality is good and 15 percent falls under fair category, results only nine percent of the patients are unhappy with the healthcare services offered by the private hospitals in the UAE.

| Healthcare subordinate Service Factors | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------|------|------|-----------|------------|---------|
| Scale | Very poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good | Mean | SD |
| 21. Nursing care | 5 | 12 | 30 | 163 | 14 | 3.75446429 | 0.74417 |
| 22. Operation and procedure | 4 | 10 | 27 | 162 | 21 | 3.83035714 | 0.72605 |
| 23. Service at Medical lab, Pharmacy, Scan and other such centers | 4 | 10 | 29 | 170 | 11 | 3.77678571 | 0.61738 |
| 24. Cleanliness | 9 | 13 | 51 | 111 | 40 | 3.71428571 | 0.82126 |
| 25. Quality of Hospital food | 8 | 12 | 55 | 119 | 30 | 3.67410714 | 0.77807 |
| 26. Medication management in this hospital | 8 | 8 | 39 | 140 | 29 | 3.77678571 | 0.70283 |

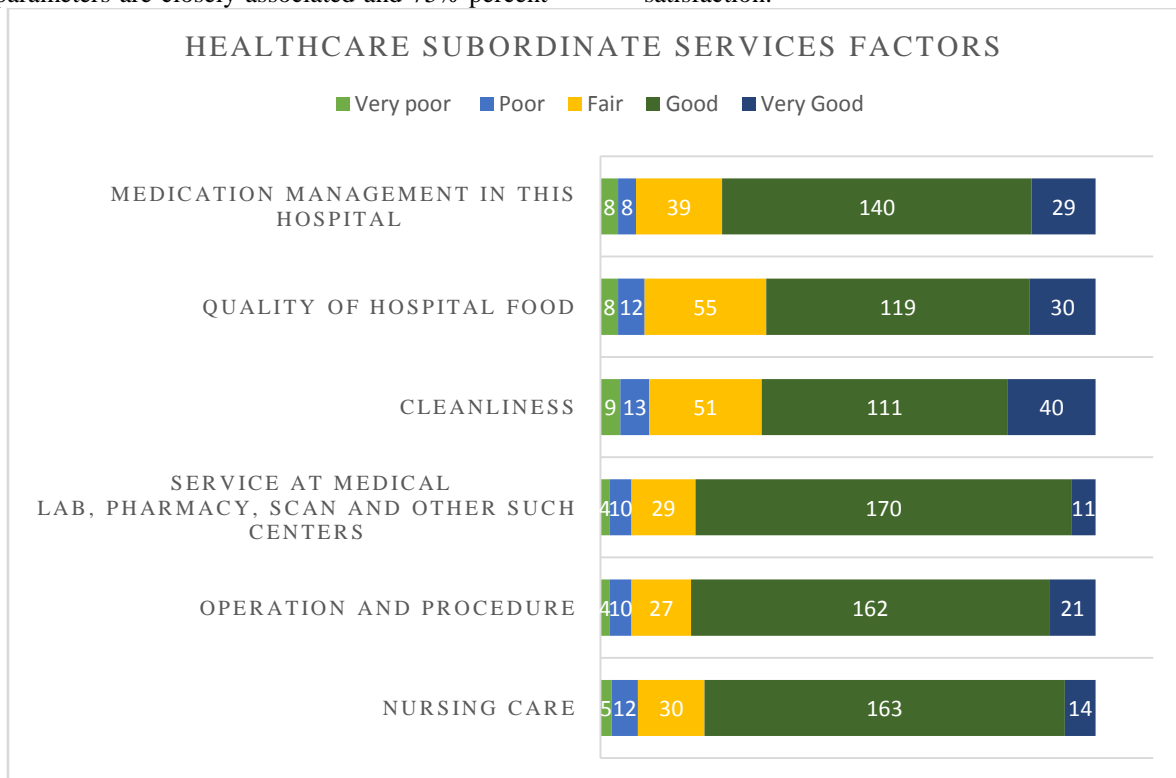
*Weights of the scales: Very poor: 1 Poor:2, Fair : 3, Good : 4, Very Good : 5
 There are few more characteristics used to measure quality healthcare services in the private

hospitals called healthcare subordinate service factors.



Max of the mean value is 3.83 and the minimum is 3.67, ranges 0.16 only. All the parameters are closely associated and 75% percent

of the feedback is significantly positive, 15% falls in fairly good and only 10% negative. Confirming that 90% of customers leave the hospital with satisfaction.



27. Overall Satisfaction

| Scale | Very poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good | Mean | SD |
|-----------|-----------|------|-------|-------|-----------|------------|---------|
| Frequency | 6 | 6 | 36 | 136 | 40 | 3.88392857 | 0.70894 |
| % | 2.7% | 2.7% | 16.1% | 60.7% | 17.9% | 100 % | |

Overall satisfaction of health services in private hospitals is significantly good. The mean value is 3.88 with std. deviation 0.7 lies between fair and very good. Hence almost 95 percent of the patients are satisfied with health services and quality of private hospitals in the UAE.

4.2 Rationale

Literature depicts that government hospitals provide better service and quality than private hospitals in the UAE in four major aspects of understanding, tangibility, consistency, responsiveness, and skills Al Neyadi HS et al (2018). Similarly, Al Harbi MF (2023) confirmed such criteria in government hospitals of Saudi Arabia. But the face of the UAE has changed a lot in recent years aligned with vision 2030 and vision 2050, UAE is very particular about sustainability in every sector including quality healthcare services. Private hospitals face challenges in business enhancement, economy and customer retention and they have to offer quality health services.

M.M._Abuzaid et al (2023) suggested that hospitals face challenges with scheduling the appointments efficiently and reducing waiting time. Waiting time is a key factor that affects normal life in the UAE and anywhere in the world. The normal parameters of age, gender, nationality education does not make any significant impact on the quality of health services but waiting time and staff interaction does.

Private hospitals should focus on five factors of patient’s satisfactions, hospital staff performance, miffed patients, hi-fi patient care services, patient care experience and patient satisfaction. Faiza Manzoor et al (2021) identified that doctor’s courteousness and behavior has weakened among healthcare services and patient satisfaction. The doctor’s behavior is an important factor to know patients' feedback and satisfaction. When a doctor is courteous, and interacts with patients, clarifies all doubts (willingness to explain medical condition and treatment procedure) and maintains good relationship with patients, enhances the patient retention rate and results positive feedback (Robin Di Matteo, 1979).

Converting the great patient experience into patient satisfaction is the responsibility of hospital administration. The word hospitality is the

general expectation of patients visiting a hospital and the same experience will be converted as satisfaction makes the healthcare service and the hospital a reputed one as a token of recognition.

4.3 Findings and Discussion

Patient satisfaction survey is necessary to know their recognition of healthcare service offered by the hospital and overall treatment. It helps to assess the overall quality of the health service in the hospital, hospital administration, staff engagement etc. The quality of services offered is the reflection of patient satisfaction and retention. Patient experience in the hospital is an important measure to know their satisfaction within a short span of time.

- The overall satisfaction of the patients who get treatment in private hospitals in the UAE is significantly positive. The feedback from the customer shows about 95% patients are happy customers with service and quality in private hospitals.
- All key healthcare service factors and healthcare subordinate services factors are having mean value clustered between 3.63 and 3.83. The relationship between quality healthcare service and residents’ satisfaction are positive and significant
- The key influencing factors of patient’s satisfaction are doctors’ behavior, nursing care, scheduling proper appointment and less waiting time, procedure, pharmacy and lab facilities and waiting time at each facility.
- Importantly the doctor’s courteousness, spending enough time with patient, giving proper explanation about disease and medication and a positive approach are the chief parameters yielding positive patient experience towards patient satisfaction that increases business, profit and reputation of the hospital.

V. CONCLUSION

The UAE is the leading medical tourism destination for patients from GCC and MENA regions. The UAE private hospitals are having sophisticated technology facilities and specialized doctors and skilled staff. The recent developments in the UAE healthcare industry are the evidence of

best practices adopted by the private hospitals. The fact of achieving the patient satisfaction and retention rate aligned with the fame of best medical tourism destination is all in the line of sustainability of quality health services (Mohamad Murad Al Bolushi et al 2017). The corporate governance of higher management in healthcare business sectors with excellent customer care and along with implementation of accreditation process as a symbol of recognition of the hospital quality service and performance is snowballing in the UAE to meet the excellence in the hospital management (Ghada Ali, 2020).

Patient satisfaction is the deciding factor of existence or closure of a hospital. The functional status of a hospital is measured by satisfaction of the patients. (Cleary et al., 1993). Patient satisfaction is the fundamental measure of quality of a hospital and often offers word of mouth information impacts highly with fellow patients in a snowballing way.

The findings of this study are quite comparable with many literatures and significant results. This study conducted among expat residents of UAE confirmed that the quality of private hospitals measured in the perception of patient satisfaction is significant. The positivity of patient satisfaction confirms the quality of service offered, good hospital administration and business and economy of private hospitals in the UAE.

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