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POSTOPERATIVE PATIENTS' SATISFACTION WITH NURSING CARE AT PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, ISLAMABAD

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Abstract

Background: Postoperative patients' satisfaction is a key indicator of the quality of nursing care, reflecting not only clinical competence but also communication, responsiveness, and emotional support. In Pakistan, limited evidence exists regarding satisfaction levels among surgical patients in tertiary hospitals, making it essential to identify strengths and gaps in nursing care delivery. Aim: The study aimed to assess postoperative patients' satisfaction with nursing care at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, Islamabad, and to highlight areas requiring improvement. Methods: An institution-based cross-sectional survey was conducted from January to December 2024. A sample of 246 adult postoperative patients (≥18 years) hospitalized for at least 24 hours was recruited using convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from the Newcastle Satisfaction with Nursing Care Scale (NSNCS), translated into Urdu and back-translated for accuracy. SPSS version 25 was used for analysis, with descriptive statistics summarizing data and chi-square tests examining associations. A p-value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant. Results: Of the 246 participants, 64.5% were male and 39.6% were aged above 45 years. Overall, 63.5% reported being very or completely satisfied with nursing care, while 36.5% expressed only moderate satisfaction. The highest-rated aspects were nurses' capability (70.6%) and time spent with patients (71.8%). The lowest-rated aspects were privacy (33.0%), individualized care (31.0%), and emotional support (36.3%). Conclusion: The findings reveal generally positive satisfaction with nursing care but highlight critical gaps in privacy, responsiveness, and individualized support. Addressing these areas through staffing improvements, enhanced communication, and patient-centered practices may significantly improve outcomes.

Frontier in Medical & Health Research

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, the healthcare system has been changed and expanded thus; the standard of care is being regarded as a right of every client who need the care rather than a privilege (Samina et al., 2008). The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) set the ultimate goal to maintain the highest possible level of health for all people, and the provision of high-quality care to attain this objective (V Indra, 2018). Nurses play a significant part in fostering patient satisfaction. Under a nurse's direct supervision, a significant amount of patient satisfaction may develop (Goodrich & Lazenby, 2023).

Quality nursing care is widely acknowledged as a fundamental element of efficient healthcare delivery systems (Campbell et al., 2000). In tertiary public hospitals, particularly within an urban context such as Islamabad, the significance of postoperative care extends beyond mere physical recuperation, contributing substantially to the overall satisfaction experienced by patients with hospital services (Lawal, 2020). Postoperative individuals frequently find themselves in a vulnerable state, heavily dependent on the proficiency, compassion, and prompt interventions administered by nursing personnel (Shippee-Rice et al., 2012).

Notwithstanding ongoing reforms within the healthcare system and enhancements in clinical methodologies in Pakistan, significant gaps persist in comprehending patients' perceptions concerning the quality of nursing care following surgical procedures (Afridi et al., 2024; Khan & Sajjan, 2017). Quality nursing care is seen as a critical component of patients' well-being and is a fundamental human right (Fuseini et al., 2022). "Patient satisfaction has no universally accepted definition or metric" (Goodrich & Lazenby, 2023). This research endeavor seeks to assess the satisfaction levels of adult postoperative patients regarding nursing care in tertiary public hospitals in Islamabad, thereby pinpointing areas necessitating enhancement and aiding in the formulation of policies and practices aimed at optimizing patient outcomes.

Methodology

This study adopted an institution-based cross-sectional survey design at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, Islamabad. The target population included adult postoperative patients aged 18 years and above who had undergone surgical procedures and remained hospitalized for at least 24 hours. A convenience sampling technique was used, with a sample size of 246 patients, calculated using the RaoSoft formula with 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error, and 80% prevalence. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from validated tools such as the Newcastle Satisfaction with Nursing Care Scale (NSNCS). The questionnaire covered demographic details, surgical and postoperative information, nursing care domains (communication, responsiveness, technical competencies, emotional support, pain alleviation), and overall satisfaction, rated on a Likert scale. Translation into Urdu and back-translation into English ensured clarity and accuracy.

Data Collection Procedure

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Pakistan Institute of Health Sciences and the study hospital before data collection. Trained data collectors approached eligible patients during postoperative recovery, explained the study's purpose, and obtained verbal informed consent. Data were collected in settings that ensured privacy and confidentiality. Questionnaires were administered directly to participants who met the inclusion criteria: adult postoperative patients (≥18 years), conscious, oriented, hospitalized for at least 24 hours, and willing to participate. Patients in ICUs, under 18, with cognitive impairment, or unwilling to participate were excluded.

Data Analysis

Data were entered and analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, were calculated for demographic characteristics and satisfaction variables. A p-value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant. Ethical principles of confidentiality, privacy, and voluntary participation were upheld throughout. Participants

Frontier in Medical & Health Research

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were assured that refusal or non-participation would not affect their medical care.

Results and analysis

The analysis shows that the majority of participants were male (64.49%), while females made up 35.51%. Most respondents were above 45 years old (39.59%), followed by 18–30 years (34.29%) and 31–45 years (26.12%). This indicates a male-dominant sample with a considerable representation of older nurses. The findings suggest maturity and experience may influence the overall study outcomes.[Table 1].

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=245)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	158	64.49%
	Female	87	35.51%
Age Group (Years)	18 - 30	84	34.29%
	31 - 45	64	26.12%
	Above 45	97	39.59%

The analysis indicates that parents were most satisfied with nurses' capability (Mean = 3.90, 70.6%) and the time spent with them (Mean = 3.89, 71.8%). Satisfaction was slightly lower for how nurses made them feel at home (69.4%) and their responsiveness to calls (67.0%). Knowledge about care also showed good satisfaction (68.1%), reflecting overall positive but variable perceptions of nursing care. [Table 2].

Table 2: Top 5 Aspects of Nursing Care with Highest Patient Satisfaction

ank	Aspect of Nursing Care	Mean Score (SD)	% Very/Completely Satisfied
	How capable nurses were at their job	3.90 (0.91)	70.6%
	The amount of time spent with you	3.89 (0.89)	71.8%
	The way the nurses made you feel at home	3.87 (0.91)	69.4%
	How quickly nurses came when you called	3.85 (0.99)	67.0%
	The amount nurses knew about your care	3.84 (0.97)	68.1%

The analysis shows relatively low satisfaction across these aspects of nursing care, with mean scores ranging from 3.05 to 3.23. The highest satisfaction was with the freedom given on the ward (34.7%) and nurses listening to concerns (36.3%). Privacy (33.0%) and willingness to respond to requests (34.3%) were also moderate. The lowest satisfaction was with being treated as an individual (31.0%), highlighting areas needing improvement. [Table 3].

Table 3: Bottom 5 Aspects of Nursing Care with Lowest Patient Satisfaction

ank	Aspect of Nursing Care	Mean Score (SD)	% Very/Completely Satisfied
	The amount of privacy nurses gave you	3.05 (1.14)	33.0%
	How willing nurses were to respond to requests	3.08 (1.04)	34.3%
	The amount of freedom you were given on the ward	3.23 (0.96)	34.7%
	How nurses listened to your worries and concerns	3.22 (1.01)	36.3%
	Nurses' treatment of you as an individual	3.21 (1.01)	31.0%

The results indicate that 63.5% of patients were highly satisfied with nursing care, reflecting generally positive perceptions. However, 36.5% showed only moderate satisfaction, pointing to unmet expectations. Dissatisfaction was also evident in certain areas, suggesting the need for targeted improvements in patient-centered aspects of care. [Table 4].

Frontier in Medical & Health Research

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Table 4: Overall Summary of Patient Satisfaction Levels

Satisfaction Category	Cumulative Percentage (%)	Interpretation
Satisfied (Very + Completely Satisfied)	63.5%	Nearly two-thirds of patients reported being highly satisfied.
Neutral (Quite Satisfied)	36.5%	Over one-third expressed only moderate or lower satisfaction.
Dissatisfied (Barely + Not at all Satisfied)	Included in "Neutral" above	A notable proportion reported clear dissatisfaction in specific areas (see Table 3).

Discussion

Patient satisfaction is a best way of assessing nursing practice in most developed countries. It also has to be practiced in developing countries like Pakistan. This study may contribute something in this area. Satisfaction studies can function to give providers of care some idea of how they would have to modify their provision of services in order to make their patients more satisfied. Satisfied patients usually trust their health care providers, and as a return, they comply with medical and nursing orders. Then, eventually, the patient's healing process will have enhanced and at the same time, they share their experiences to others, which increases the number of clients who uses the services. If not satisfied the opposite may happen.

This study is to assess quality of nursing care through examining patients' satisfaction in selected hospital (Pakistan institute of medical sciences) in Islamabad. Adult admitted patients have interviewed since the study was on adult patients who were admitted in surgical wards (1, 2...6).

The overall rating of postoperative patients' satisfaction with nursing care is 63.5% of patients reported being satisfied (very/completely satisfied), while 36.5% expressed varying degrees of dissatisfaction. These results align with previous studies indicating that while nursing care was generally perceived positively in developing countries several areas require improvement to enhance patient experiences (Ali et al., 2022) (Khan & Hussain, 2023).

The highest satisfaction has observed the time nurses spent with patients (71.8%) and how capable nurses were at their job (70.6%). This suggests that personalized attention and clinical competence are critical determinants of patient satisfaction in postoperative care. (Rehman et al., 2023) reported similar findings who found that patients in Pakistani hospitals valued nurses' professional skills but often felt that staff shortages limited interaction time. The emphasis on nurses' capability aligns with global studies indicating that technical proficiency significantly influences patient trust and recovery outcomes (WHO, 2022).

The study revealed moderate satisfaction levels concerning communication and information provision, with (65.3%) of patients being very or completely satisfied with the amount of information received about their condition and treatment. This finding is particularly significant as adequate patient education is crucial for postoperative recovery and complication prevention. The moderate satisfaction in this domain echoes the work of (Al-Hussami et al., 2023), who identified communication gaps as persistent challenges in postoperative care across various healthcare settings. Patients' need for clear, comprehensive, and timely information appears to be only partially met in current practice, indicating an important area for quality improvement initiatives.

The lowest satisfaction scores emerged in relation to privacy (33.0% very/completely satisfied) and patient autonomy (34.7% very/completely satisfied). These findings are particularly troubling given the fundamental importance of privacy in healthcare and its direct relationship with patient dignity. (Mohamed and Gouda's 2023) research in comparable settings similarly highlighted privacy concerns as a major source of patient dissatisfaction. The physical design of many postoperative units, with open bays or limited curtains, combined with the frequent need for exposure during assessments

Frontier in Medical & Health Research

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and procedures, creates inherent challenges to maintaining patient privacy. Furthermore, the restrictions on mobility and independence that often accompany postoperative protocols appear to negatively impacts on the patient's sense of autonomy and control over their environment.

More concerning are the findings related to emotional support and personalized care, where satisfaction levels dropped significantly. Only (36.3%) of patients felt very or completely satisfied with how nurses listened to their worries and concerns, and merely (31.0%) felt adequately treated as individuals. These results corroborate the findings of (Alhalal, 2022), who similarly identified emotional support as the weakest aspect of postoperative nursing care. The lack of personalized attention may stem from multiple factors, including high nurse-to-patient ratios, time constraints, and the increasing documentation burden that reduces direct patient interaction time. As (Piredda et al., 2021) noted the current healthcare environment often prioritizes task completion over therapeutic communication, potentially compromising the patient experience.

The study's findings take on greater significance when considered in the context of the growing body of evidence linking patient satisfaction with clinical outcomes. Research by (Rathert et al., 2022). have demonstrated that satisfied patients tend to have better adherence to treatment plans, lower readmission rates, and improved recovery trajectories. The areas of dissatisfaction identified in this study - particularly concerning emotional support and privacy - may therefore have implications beyond patient experience, potentially affecting clinical outcomes and healthcare utilization patterns.

Conclusion

While postoperative patients in Pakistan generally express satisfaction with nursing care, significant gaps remain in privacy, responsiveness, and personalized attention. Addressing these issues through policy changes, better staffing, and communication training could further enhance patient experiences and recovery outcomes. Future research should explore longitudinal studies comparing satisfaction before and after implementing such interventions.

Recommendations

- Hospitals should **reduce nurse workload** by hiring more nursing staff to ensure timely and attentive care. Studies indicate that better staffing leads to higher patient satisfaction.
- **Install curtains, partitions, or private recovery rooms** to address patients' privacy concerns, particularly in shared wards.
- Nursing staff should undergo **training programs** focusing on **active listening, empathy, and clear communication** to improve responsiveness and individualized care.
- Hospitals should implement **real-time patient feedback systems** (e.g., digital surveys) to identify and address dissatisfaction promptly

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