Analyse the impact of physician technical skills on health services quality in Malaysia by using SPPSS

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Abstract. The objective of this study is to examine the relationship of the physician technical skills with patient’s satisfaction. This study was conducted at the Penang mainland general hospital under the Ministry of Health Malaysia. Data was collected using questionnaires to n=115 outpatients who attended the hospital clinics except for psychiatric clinic. The finding in this study has proven that there was a strong relationship between technical skills by physicians and patient’s satisfaction. Physician technical skills are seen as key determinants to improve health services quality in Malaysia.

1. Introduction

The profession as a medical doctor is considered as one of the critical skills needed as they must accurately diagnose diseases, guide treatment, identify diseases and must show public health significance through surveillance and public health policy development (Hiwot, Adinew, Anteneh, Habtamu, Sisay & Daniel, 2020). The word ‘profession’ and ‘professionalism’ came from the Latin word ‘professio’ which means a public declaration with the force of promise (Faiz, 2009). The elements of professionalism classified as an integrity, caring, compassion, respect, accountability, excellence and also leadership (Md Zakirul Abdus, Asadul, Zaida, Wan, Salwani, Nor & Maimul, 2014). Subsequently, any medicine fields need formal education and training and, controlled by code of ethics by the concerned government bodies.

Although medical professions were considered as high risk and challenging work by many (Holtman, 2011) it is the responsibility of the doctors to provide the best care for patients and served with upmost priority (Md Zakirul et. al, 2014). Mostly patients has the connotation that being a good doctor means having a high and good academic qualifications. To be a good doctor is to have a period of long and quality hands-on experiences; able to practice good behavioural senses; adhere effective interpersonal communication skills; able to understand socio-cultural diversities, values and prejudices; respect patient’s privacy and, able to provide adequate information (Reha, Engin & Gunnur, 2019).
Hence, the most important aspect of medical practitioners is to give the best service as they can in increasing patient’s satisfaction in order to boost the patient’s level of confidence towards their respective doctors (Oleksii Korzh & Olga Tsodikova, 2019). According to Boshra, Narjes, Azizollah, Hossein-Ali (2019), patient’s satisfaction is defined as the basic criterion that gives information about the level of patient’s values and expectations on medical services.

Another vital factor in reflecting the medical quality aspect is physician’s technical skills. Technical skills are defined as the wisdom, knowledge and expertise of physicians who can assure that they can provide the best service to patients and provide integrity, fair and caring services (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1991 in Andaleeb, Siddiqui & Khandakar, 2007). While the concept of technical skills described by Marshall and Hays (1994) as patient's assessment of multiple dimensions of health care. Elaborated by Boquiren, Hack, Beaver and Williamson (2015), technical skills are based on patients' perceptions of the knowledge and expertise of their doctors which covered on the quality of the healthcare dimensions processes of information, language and authority (WHO, 2008).

2. Methodology
This is a quantitative study which uses questionnaires that were being distributed among the patients in all of the clinics (excluding psychiatric clinic) in Penang mainland general hospital under the Ministry of Health Malaysia. The purposive sampling technique was used with a total of n=115 patients involvement. Data were analysed using descriptive and correlation analysis using the SPSS 23.0 program.

3. Finding

| Area of clinics                     | f  | %   |
|------------------------------------|----|-----|
| Orthopedic clinic                  | 31 | 27.5|
| Medical clinic (MOPD)              | 24 | 21.2|
| Nephrology clinic                  |  3 |  2.7|
| Neurology clinic                   |  9 |  7.9|
| Obstetrics & Gynecology clinics    | 12 | 10.7|
| Diabetic clinic                    |  3 |  2.7|
| ENT clinic                         |  6 |  5.3|
| Infection disease clinic           |  1 |  0.9|
| Cardiology clinic                  | 13 | 11.4|
| Oncology clinic                    |  2 |  1.8|

Table 1 reported on 104 respondents from n=115 patients responded to the clinic responded to treatment. It showed that, there were 10 clinics in which respondents received treatment namely Orthopedic Clinic (27.5%), followed by Medical Clinic (MOPD) (21.2%), Cardiology Clinic (11.4%), Orthopedic and Gynecological Clinic (10.7%), Neurology Clinic (7.9%) ), ENT clinics (5.3%), while Nephrology and Diabetic clinics received the same percentage (2.7%). This was followed by the Oncology clinic (1.8%) while the lowest was from the Infection Disease clinic (0.9%)
Table 2: Technical skills items among medical practitioners

| Item                                                                 | M    | S.D.   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------|
| 1. I think my attending physician has everything I need to provide complete care | 4.02 | (0.513) |
| 2. Sometimes doctors make me wonder about my illness                | 3.83 | (1.157) |
| 3. The doctor very careful to check me while I got treatment        | 4.10 | (.546)  |
| 4. Sometimes I doubted the ability of physician                      | 4.03 | (1.034) |
| 5. Some of the doctors I met were lacking experienced in treating my health problems | 4.00 | (1.051) |

(n=115)

Table 2 corresponds to the mean of the technical skills scores consisting of 5 items. The average score for all of the five items is above M=3.5. The highest score value was the third item “when patients go for health care, doctors are seen to be very careful about the patients” (M=4.10, S.D.= .546). Then for the fourth item “the patient felt confident in the ability of the doctor to treat the patient (rev)” (M=4.03, S.D.=1.034) was second highest. This was followed by the first item of “patients who think the treating physician has everything necessary to provide complete care” (M=4.02, S.D.=0.513). Next is the fifth item “some of the physicians the patients encountered were very experienced in treating the patient's health problems” (rev) (M=4.00, S.D.=1.051). The lowest score value was the second item “the doctor did not make the patient wonder about the underlying disease” (rev) (M= 3.83, S.D.=1.157).

Table 3: Correlation between technical skills by doctor and patient satisfaction

| Independent Variable | Patient Satisfaction | r(p) | r²    |
|----------------------|----------------------|------|-------|
| Technical skills by doctor | .413** (0.000)      | 0.171|       |

N= 115, *p< .05, **p<.001

Hypothesis H₁: There is significant relationship between technical skills by physicians and patient’s satisfaction.

Data analysis in Table 3 showed that technical skills were positively related to patient satisfaction (r = .413, p = .000). The strength of the relationship is also moderate. This explains that the technical skills displayed by doctors have a significant relationship with patient satisfaction. So hypothesis H1 is accepted.

The results of this study are similar to the findings of the study conducted by Aniza et al. (2011) and Ganasegeran et al. (2015). The study conducted by Aniza et al. (2011) also reported that the strength of the relationship was also moderate.

4. Conclusion and recommendations
Result from this study can be noted that element of technical skills also contributed in improving the quality of services. So that, for future research, it is suggested to study other factors to see which factors more contribute to patient satisfaction. Besides that, it is suggested that future studies may extend the sample count by looking at the work context of private hospitals to make comparisons with government hospitals.
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