

Doctor-Patient Communication and Its Effect on Satisfaction

Introduction

Studies have shown patients are more satisfied with their doctors when they perceive them to be capable, understanding, and friendly (Steinbrook, 2006 and Johnson, Levenkron, Suchman, & Manchester, 1988). The purpose of this study is to show perceived doctor communication and its effect on reported patient satisfaction. When doctors showcase good communication, patient satisfaction will be higher than with poor communication.

Sample of Survey Items

Participants rated items on a 7-item Likert-type scale of agreement and disagreement from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”

Sample Items

“The last time I visited my doctor, my doctor...

- Treated me with respect
- Spoke in terms I could understand
- Showed care and concern

“I am satisfied with my doctor.”

Procedure

A sample of 160 people were given a questionnaire about their most recent doctor’s visit and their perceptions of care received with a measure of satisfaction with doctor. 147 people completed the survey. Participants ranged from 18-65+, with 95 reported females and 60 reported males. Survey was voluntary and administered online.

Results

The correlation between doctor satisfaction and provision with sufficient medical care ($r = .75$) was significant, as was the correlation between doctor satisfaction and respect perceived by patients from doctors ($r = .69$). Respect perceived by patients from doctors and provision of sufficient medical care was also significant ($r = .78$). All variables were tested for reliability and Cronbach’s alpha was found to be .89, meaning all items were found to be reliable. No item if deleted increased Cronbach’s alpha.



Discussion

All items correlated positively together, supporting the hypothesis that perceived good doctor-patient communication is related to high patient satisfaction. More extensive research into the facets of doctor-patient communication could improve all patient satisfaction, improving healthcare as a whole.

References

- Johnson, C. G., Levenkron, J. C., Suchman, A. L., and Manchester, R. (1988). Does physician uncertainty affect patient satisfaction? *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 3, 144-149.
- Steinbrook, R. (2006). Imposing personal responsibility for health. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 355, 753-756.