



Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

Convention ID: 956

Submitting author: Dr Buong Chieng

Post title: Resident, Caritas Medical Centre, NULL

A Pilot Questionnaire Study to find out the Patient's Hidden Agenda in Consultation in a General Outpatient Clinic (GOPC)

Chieng BS; Yiu MP; Sy WM; Luk W; Yiu YK

Department of Family Medicine and Primary Health Care, Kowloon West Cluster, Hospital Authority, Hong Kong SAR, China

Keywords:

Hidden agenda

Consultation

Rapport

Satisfaction

Outpatient

Outpatient

Introduction

Patients sometimes have hidden agendas which they are unable to voice at doctors' consultations. The reasons for this are manifold, including lack of rapport with the doctor, time constraints and patient feeling awkward when seeing doctors of the opposite sex, among other things.

Objectives

To assess whether patients attending the Cheung Sha Wan GOPC had any hidden agendas that they were unable to raise during the consultation, the reasons behind the failure and whether this affected the patients' satisfaction with the doctor's consultation.

Methodology

Anonymous questionnaires (in English with colloquial Chinese translation) were randomly given out to patients at Cheung Sha Wan GOPC. The questionnaire was adapted from the Patient's Agenda Form (McKinley RK, Middleton JF. What do patients want from doctors? Content analysis of written patient agendas for the consultation. Br J Gen Pract 1999; 49: 796- 800).

Result

29 questionnaires were returned. All the questions were completed in 26 out of 29 questionnaires, giving a response rate of 89.66%. The mean age of patients was 53.8 years old. 46.15% of the patients were male. 80.77% of patients would like the doctors to prescribe medications. 88.46% of patients would like the doctors to explain the condition/ illness to them. 76.92% of patients would like further investigations. 50% of patients would like specialist referral for their condition. 26.92% of patients come with the expectation of requesting a sick leave. After seeing the doctor, 80.77% of patients did manage to discuss the point(s) they had in mind. For

the patients who did not manage to discuss the point(s) that they had in mind, the reasons given were (i) Forgot to discuss it (ii) Advised by doctor to rebook another appointment (iii) Not comfortable to discuss with the particular doctor. All the patients surveyed were very satisfied/ satisfied with the consultations. Despite a small proportion of patient (19.23%) who had hidden agenda not picked up by the consulting doctor, there was no patient who was not satisfied/ very unsatisfied with the doctor's consultation. One reason for such high level of satisfaction is that patients are reluctant to criticize health care professionals, the so called normative effect (Ahmad K, Ramsay B. Patients' Fears and Expectations: Exploring the Hidden Agenda in Our Consultation. Arch Dermatol 2009; 145 (6): 722-3). Another possible reason is that patients appreciate the work and effort put in by doctors in busy out-patient clinics. Despite the high level of satisfaction from the patients, it is by no means to say that our consultations are perfect. Perhaps there will be future opportunities to conduct larger scale studies, with the aim of increasing the awareness of patients' hidden agenda so as to continue to improve our communication with our patients.