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Evaluating Service Quality from Patients' Perceptions: Application of Importance–performance Analysis Method

Rafat Mohebifar, Hana Hasani, Ameneh Barikani, Sima Rafiei*

Department of Health Management, School of Health, Qazvin University of Medical Sciences, Qazvin, Iran.

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Abstract

Objectives: Providing high service quality is one of the main functions of health systems. Measuring service quality is the basic prerequisite for improving quality. The aim of this study was to evaluate the quality of service in teaching hospitals using importance–performance analysis matrix.

Methods: A descriptive–analytic study was conducted through a cross-sectional method in six academic hospitals of Qazvin, Iran, in 2012. A total of 360 patients contributed to the study. The sampling technique was stratified random sampling. Required data were collected based on a standard questionnaire (SERVQUAL). Data analysis was done through SPSS version 18 statistical software and importance–performance analysis matrix.

Results: The results showed a significant gap between importance and performance in all five dimensions of service quality ($p < 0.05$). In reviewing the gap, “reliability” (2.36) and “assurance” (2.24) dimensions had the highest quality gap and “responsiveness” had the lowest gap (1.97). Also, according to findings, reliability and assurance were in Quadrant (I), empathy was in Quadrant (II), and tangibles and responsiveness were in Quadrant (IV) of the importance–performance matrix.

Conclusion: The negative gap in all dimensions of quality shows that quality improvement is necessary in all dimensions. Using quality and diagnosis measurement instruments such as importance–performance analysis will help hospital managers with planning of service quality improvement and achieving long-term goals.