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# Implementation of a patient satisfaction survey in the Pacific University Family Vision Center

## Abstract

Patient satisfaction surveys are a key outcome indicator of quality healthcare delivery. One of the goals in optometric educational systems is to teach interns to provide quality healthcare. The purpose of this study was to design, implement and evaluate a patient satisfaction survey in the Pacific University Family Vision Center. The survey would specifically benefit the intern by measuring and providing valuable feedback in regards to the individual intern's efficiency, professionalism, courtesy and communication skills. The card was also designed to be short, straightforward, and easy to fill out. The results showed a 46% return rate, with a majority of the responses indicating a high level of patient satisfaction. Future implementation of the patient satisfaction survey is recommended in the clinics.

## Degree Type

Thesis

## Degree Name

Master of Science in Vision Science

## Committee Chair

Dennis L. Smith

## Keywords

patient satisfaction survey, outcome assessment, outcome indicators, quality control, quality assurance indicators

## Subject Categories

Optometry

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IMPLEMENTATION OF A  
PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY  
IN THE PACIFIC UNIVERSITY  
FAMILY VISION CENTER

BY

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the  
College of Optometry  
Pacific University  
Forest Grove, Oregon  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Optometry  
May, 1998

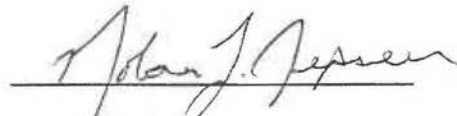
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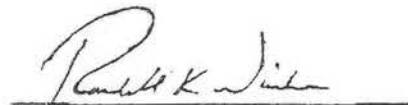
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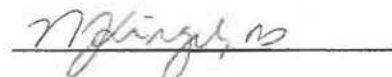
  
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Nolan L. Jepsen

  
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Nolan Jepsen is originally from Vernal, Utah. He did his undergraduate work at Utah State University in chemistry, graduating in 1994. His wife Marilee also graduated from Utah State University in Elementary Education. They had a baby girl, named Alison, during Nolan's third year of optometry school.

Nolan became interested in the field of optometry in undergraduate school by taking an careers class. He had always been interested in the health professions, as well as having a great appreciation for the sense of sight. After graduation, Nolan and his family plan on moving back to the Utah area for work. Nolan would like to start out working with another optometrist, then move into a partnership or solo practice later on. He wants to be involved in Local service clubs as well as helping the local optometric organizations.

Lincoln Dygert is from Farmington, Utah. He has been married for seven years to Debbie and has a three year old daughter named Misty. Lincoln studied zoology at Weber State University from 1990 to 1994 and then moved to Forest Grove, Oregon to attend Pacific University. In 1995, Lincoln received his B.S. in Visual Science while attending optometry school. Debbie also attended Weber State University and graduated in 1993 in Respiratory Therapy.

Lincoln started making visits to the eye doctor very early in his life and gained an interest in optometry while completing his undergraduate studies. He plans to return to Utah after graduation to practice optometry and settle with his family.

Randall Winder was born in Provo, Utah, and was raised in Missouri, South Dakota, and Utah. He received a B.S. Degree in Human Biology at Brigham Young University in 1994. Randy met Toni, his future wife, while attending BYU. They were married in 1993, and currently have two children; Joshua and Anna. He is currently a student at Pacific University College of Optometry, and plans to graduate in 1998.

Randy first became interested in Optometry during undergraduate studies in physics at BYU. He received a Military Health Professions scholarship while attending Pacific University, and his plans after graduation include working as an optometrist for the Army.

# Abstract

Patient satisfaction surveys are a key outcome indicator of quality healthcare delivery.

One of the goals in optometric educational systems is to teach interns to provide quality healthcare. The purpose of this study was to design, implement and evaluate a patient satisfaction survey in the Pacific University Family Vision Center. The survey would specifically benefit the intern by measuring and providing valuable feedback in regards to the individual intern's efficiency, professionalism, courtesy and communication skills. The card was also designed to be short, straightforward, and easy to fill out. The results showed a 46% return rate, with a majority of the responses indicating a high level of patient satisfaction. Future implementation of the patient satisfaction survey is recommended in the clinics.

Key words: Patient satisfaction survey

Outcome assessment

Outcome indicators

Quality control

Quality assurance indicators



## **Acknowledgments:**

The authors wish to give special thanks to Drs. Smith and Lingel for their guidance throughout this project. With their experience and input, the project has been a helpful learning experience for each of us.

## **Introduction:**

The mission statement of the Pacific University Family Vision Centers sets goals to “serve as state of the art facilities for students to *fulfill the vision and eye care needs of the public...*” (see Appendix 1) In order for Pacific University College of Optometry to be an accredited optometry school, they must adhere to the strict guidelines set by the Council on Optometric Education<sup>1</sup> (COE). The COE is the accrediting agency established by the American Optometric Association in 1930 and recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the U.S. Office of Education. One guideline set by the COE is to have an ongoing program to evaluate patient care outcomes using input from patients themselves. Pacific University college of optometry currently has a program designed to receive feedback from patients concerning the quality of care received while at the clinic. (see Appendix 2) Although this feedback may benefit the clinic as a whole by alerting administrators of problems in office procedures, clinic facilities, or inappropriate care, it does not specifically provide insight to the individual interns providing the care.<sup>2,3</sup> This feedback is essential to help each intern learn the appropriate skills in dealing with patients and meeting the patients eye care needs. Novak et.al. supports this idea in saying, “patient satisfaction, compliance, perceptions of physician competence, and health outcomes... are strongly related to the doctors interpersonal skills.<sup>4</sup>” Klamen and Williams also point out that patient satisfaction rating scales may lead to more effective learning, by using the feedback to highlight changes or lack of changes in a medical students interpersonal skills.<sup>5</sup>

Patient feedback, as explained by Carney and Mitchell, may play an important role in helping interns develop communication skills needed in providing patient satisfaction<sup>6</sup>. “Patient satisfaction is the patient’s perception of the quality of care he or she received throughout the entire interaction with the doctor and the office staff. This perception of quality will affect the patient’s trust in the doctor and the patient’s compliance with the doctor’s instructions and prescribed treatment regimens. It will also effect the patient’s willingness to return to the doctor for future care.<sup>7</sup>” Harriet Stein, President of Harriet Stien and Associates Inc., a prominent management and communication firm, confirmed the importance of patient satisfaction by saying, “good patient relations can make or break an optometric practice.<sup>8</sup>” She specifically points to the poor attitudes and communication skills of the doctor and staff as common reasons for dissatisfied patients leaving a practice. Perhaps with the appropriate feedback, these valuable lessons in patient satisfaction can be learned by the intern while still in optometry school. One method of providing appropriate feedback is the use of a patient satisfaction survey designed specifically to focus on the individual intern’s communication skills and the quality of care he or she provides.<sup>9</sup>

In 1991, the American Optometric Association (AOA) published *A guide to the development of an Optometric Quality Assurance Program*, in which the importance of patient satisfaction surveys was presented. Subsequently, in 1993, the Commission on Quality Assessment and Improvement was formed by the AOA to further address quality assessment and improvement needs for optometrists. The commission regards patient satisfaction surveys as

...a significant component of quality assurance programs. As the emphasis on the assessment of health care has shifted over the years from structure to process to outcome indicators, the patient satisfaction survey has taken on increased importance. It was not until providers realized that medical diagnosis and treatment were greatly effected by accurate patient communication and active

patient involvement in the care process, that patient satisfaction gained its current significance in the evaluation of health care. Patient satisfaction is now itself a key outcome indicator.<sup>10</sup>

The purpose of this study was to design, implement for a trial period, and evaluate responses from a patient satisfaction card that was short, straight forward and easy to fill out. Its future intention being to provide feedback to the optometry intern about his or her professionalism, efficiency, courtesy and communication skills. It is the author's goal to provide a means for future interns to evaluate their strengths and/or weaknesses.

### **Methods:**

The questionnaire (see figure 1) was designed based in part on a sample survey from the AOA manual, "A Model Quality Assessment and Improvement Program for Optometric Practices," as well as questions customized for the Forest Grove Vision Clinic. A card to be filled out privately and anonymously was the method chosen for surveying patients, because such a method has been shown to provide more candid responses than interview or phone call.<sup>11,12</sup> We designed the questions using the Likert Scale method (eg. strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree), which allows for more information to be obtained and is more reliable than a simple "yes" or "no" response.<sup>10,12</sup> Although the Likert Scale method gives expanded information, it does limit the patient's response. For this reason, a Suggestions/Comments section was included at the bottom of each survey.

# Pacific University Family Vision Center

## Patient Satisfaction Card

We as interns want to provide you with the finest quality of eye and vision care services. Please assist us in meeting this goal by completing the following questionnaire and returning it to the box provided at the reception desk. Your comments and suggestions are extremely helpful to us in assessing and improving the quality of our optometric services.

1=strongly disagree    4=agree  
 2=disagree            5=strongly agree  
 3=neutral

- |  |                              |   |                             |   |   |
|--|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 1. The intern was dressed appropriately for the exam.  | 1                            | 2 | 3                           | 4 | 5 |
| 2. The intern was pleasant and courteous.  | 1                            | 2 | 3                           | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The intern was confident with the examination procedures.   | 1                            | 2 | 3                           | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The intern answered all of my questions fully.  | 1                            | 2 | 3                           | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The intern showed an interest in my eye or vision problems.   | 1                            | 2 | 3                           | 4 | 5 |
| 6. The intern explained the examination procedures and the results of the eye exam to my satisfaction. | 1                            | 2 | 3                           | 4 | 5 |
| 7. The intern performed the exam efficiently.  | 1                            | 2 | 3                           | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I would recommend your services to friends and family?  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes |   | <input type="checkbox"/> no |   |   |
| 9. I plan to return to this clinic for my future eye care needs?                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> yes |   | <input type="checkbox"/> no |   |   |

**Suggestions or Comments**

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Figure 1

Patients selected to participate in the survey were seen by fourth year interns in the Forest Grove Family Vision Center primary care clinic. As the survey was in the development stage, each clinic intern who would potentially be evaluated was contacted to receive informed consent as well as resolve any potential concerns. All of the interns contacted were enthusiastic about receiving feedback from patients, but some voiced concerns about the privacy of the responses and comments given. For the purposes of this study, the responses were kept confidential, protecting the privacy of both the intern and the patient. Neither the interns' nor the patients' names appear on the survey cards and only the experimenters were permitted to view

the finished surveys.

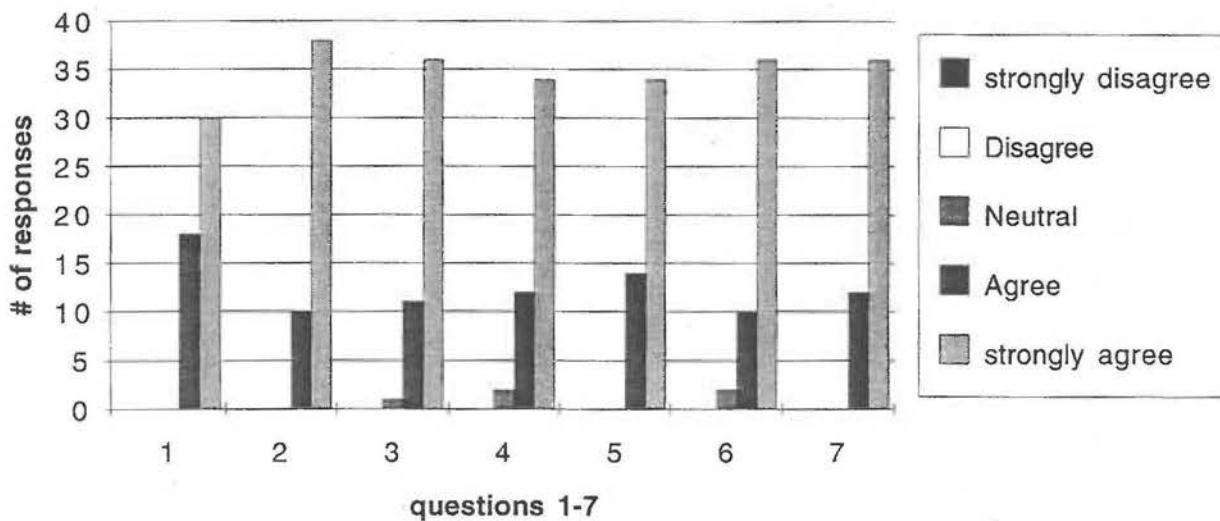
The nine question survey was presented to the patients by the receptionist at the completion of the examination. As suggested by the AOA Quality Assurance Manual Committee, the patients completed the forms and deposited them into a locked container before leaving the clinic.<sup>10</sup> The responses were then evaluated for each question.

**Results:**

Of the 104 patients seen by the interns involved during the time period in which the survey was in the clinic, 48 (46%) were completed and returned to the survey container. For each question, the responses were tallied and displayed as a raw number and percentage (see table 1 and graph 1).

Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	#s	%	#s	%	#s	%	#s	%	#s	%
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	38	30	63
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	21	38	79
3	0	0	0	0	1	2	11	23	36	75
4	0	0	0	0	2	4	12	25	34	71
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	29	34	71
6	0	0	0	0	2	4	10	21	36	75
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	25	36	75
	Yes	%	No	%	No Response	%				
8	46	96	2	4	0	0				
9	45	94	2	4	1	2				

Table1 Patient responses



graph 1 Survey results

In question 1, 62% strongly agreed and 38% agreed that the intern was appropriately dressed for the exam. For question 2, which stated, “the intern was pleasant and courteous,” 79% strongly agreed, and 21% agreed. 75% strongly agreed, 23% agreed, and 2% were neutral on question 3, which stated, “the intern demonstrated confidence in performing the examination procedures.”

Question 4 asked if all of the patients questions were fully answered; 71% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, and 4% were neutral with their opinion. Question 5 which stated that “the intern showed interest in the patient’s vision problems,” was strongly agreed to by 71% and agreed to by 29%.

In question 6, 75% strongly agreed and 21% agreed that the interns explanation of the procedures and the results of the examination were to their satisfaction; 4% were neutral on this question.

Question 7 stated that the intern performed the exam efficiently; 75% strongly agreed with this statement and 25% agreed. Question 8 addressed whether or not the patient would recommend the interns services to friends and family. 96% said “yes”, 0% said “no”, and 4% did not check any of the choices. Question 9 asked if the patient planned on returning to the clinic for future

eye care needs. 94% said they would return, 2% said they would not return, and 4% gave no response. The one card, which represents 2% of patients who said they would not return, showed all “strongly agree” responses on the first seven questions and also indicated they would still recommend their friends and family to Pacific University for future eye care needs. The *Suggestions or Comments* section of the survey yielded seven written comments (14.7%). No suggestions were given; however, comments included “very pleasant experience,” and “this is the first time I have understood how my diabetes effects my eyes.” The five remaining comments were also very positive.

### **Discussion:**

We feel a return rate of 46% was adequate for the study. The satisfactory response rate to the card can be attributed to it being short and easy to fill out, as well as its convenience in distribution and collection; one of our desired outcomes.

Another outcome desired in the study was to evaluate the potential usefulness of the survey card in providing the intern with personal feedback from the patient in regard to their strengths and/or weaknesses. The authors feel this objective was met, since we, as well as others<sup>4,5</sup> believe that any feedback from patients is beneficial. Although the responses were overwhelmingly on the positive side, it is important to note that both “positive” and “negative” feedback can be considered useful.<sup>5</sup> It is the authors opinion that positive feedback solidifies and encourages good performance whereas negative feedback identifies areas of weakness and may encourage improvement.

The highly positive responses on the card lead the authors to a number of potential explanations. First, it is possible that the majority of the patients are satisfied with their care, or



that only the satisfied patients took the time to fill out the survey. Another hypothesis is that patient expectations are lower for a student learning the aspects of the profession.<sup>9</sup> With this in mind the patient may have a tendency to respond more positively to the survey. A third possible explanation is that the survey questions selected did not identify areas of dissatisfaction. In the future it may be useful to receive input from patients on questions to be used, reword the existing questions,<sup>13</sup> and/or replace some of the existing questions with those which may better identify inadequate skills of the intern.

In summary, the authors feel the goal of creating a survey card that was short, straight forward and easy to complete was achieved as shown by the return rate of 46%. Secondly, it is the authors opinion that the responses received on the card could be useful to help interns progress in areas of professionalism, efficiency, courtesy and communication skills. The only additional step needed for future implementation of the patient satisfaction card, is to confidentially route the completed survey cards to the interns. One example on how this could be done, is for the front office staff to provide an envelope with the interns name on it that would be used to enclose the finished survey cards. The card and envelope could then be deposited in a locked container to be emptied weekly by a work study student or one of the office personnel. The surveys would then be delivered to the optometry students' mailbox. It is our hope that future interns will utilize patient survey feedback to evaluate their methods of treatment, recognize their strengths, identify weaknesses and take appropriate action to improve. In conclusion, the authors recommend implementation of the patient satisfaction card into all Pacific University eye clinics, as well as similar implementation in other schools of optometry.

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# Appendix 1

## Mission Statement

The Pacific University Family Vision Centers serve as state-of-the-art facilities for students to fulfill the vision and eye care needs of the public through instruction, by embracing the full scope of contemporary optometric and visual science, clinical experience, and research. Family Vision Center Staff assist in this educational process by professionally and compassionately coordinating the provision of vision care services by optometry students for all patients.

# Appendix 2

## PACIFIC UNIVERSITY FAMILY VISION CENTER PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

We value your trust in caring for the vision needs of you and your family. So that we can continue improving our services and your care, we are asking for comments and suggestions regarding your care at our Family Vision Center. Please take a moment to complete the following questions and return your comments in the attached self-addressed and stamped envelope. Your response will help us improve the services we offer and will remain completely anonymous. **Thank you** for taking the time to complete this survey.

1) What type of vision care did you receive while at the Family Vision Center?  
(Please circle the appropriate choices).

Free Screening    Vision Examination    Special Testing    Contact Lenses    Infant/Pediatric Care  
 Lens Study    Low Vision Care    Vision Therapy    Eyewear Fitting/Adjustment/Repair

Please indicate whether you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with the following statements concerning the Family Vision Center.  
(CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH STATEMENT.)

	Strongly Agree		Neutral		Strongly Disagree	Doesn't Apply
2) I felt comfortable while in the waiting area.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
3) I was addressed by my correct name and title.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4) The Vision Center was clean and professional in appearance.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
5) The reception staff acted in a courteous and professional manner.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
6) The student intern's conduct was courteous and professional.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
7) My examination was conducted efficiently.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
8) I felt the examination was thorough.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
9) The attending doctor's conduct was courteous and professional.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
10) The doctors explained my condition so that I understood my problem.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
11) The staff's conduct was courteous and professional in the eyewear dispensary.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
12) I feel my vision/eye problems were solved.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
13) I look forward to using the Vision Center again in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

PLEASE COMPLETE OTHER SIDE

14) Please check the age of the person who received the eye appointment.  
(Check one box only).

- less than 10 years old
- between 10 years old and 20 years old
- between 21 years old and 40 years old
- between 41 years old and 60 years old
- between 61 years old and 80 years old
- over 80 years old

15) What particularly *pleased you* about your visit to the Vision Center?

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16) What did you like *least* about your visit to the Vision Center?

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17) Overall, how would you rate the quality of care provided by the Vision Center?

- excellent
- good
- fair
- poor

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

18) What was the name of the intern who examined you?

DR. \_\_\_\_\_

- I do not remember.

19) [OPTIONAL] If there is anything about your experience in the Family Vision Center that you would like to discuss with our staff, please give us your name and telephone number.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_