

I.Q. -- Interesting Quotes

Editorial Staff

Are Chiropractic Patients Satisfied?

This question was recently explored in a study presented in the January 1993 issue of the Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics (JMPT). The paper, "Patient Satisfaction with Chiropractic Care" gives the results of a 32 statement questionnaire that was mailed to 541 new and existing chiropractic patients.

The study reveals what the important factors are in patient satisfaction. While some of the results appear obvious, some may surprise you. Ultimately, this paper gives the DC a better picture of how their care is perceived by patients:

Access

"Of the three satisfaction scales dealing with specific dimensions of chiropractic care, responding patients were most satisfied with the accessibility of their doctors (mean = 1.69), and only a negative view concerning treatment outcome increased the likelihood that patients would be less satisfied with accessibility."

Length of Care

"Several questions within the general satisfaction scale were of interest. For example, 28% of responding patients either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that 'improvements in my condition took longer than expected.' However, there was only a weak relationship between the response mean to this question and the duration of treatment ($r=.18$, $p<.001$) and the number of visits ($r=.22$, $p<.001$)."

Quality of Care and Recommending the DC

"In contrast, a significant percentage (84%) felt that the care they received was '...just about perfect' and 97% either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, 'I would recommend this doctor to a friend or relative.'"

Financial Aspects of Care

"Patients were less satisfied with the financial aspects of their care (mean = 2.24), and three patients characteristics had a statistically significant influence in the response mean for this scale. Understandably, patients were more likely to express dissatisfaction with this dimension if they had lower reported incomes, no insurance coverage or indicated that their perception of treatment outcome was less than substantial or complete."

Insurance Coverage

"The adequacy of insurance coverage was a greater source of patient dissatisfaction than the professional fees or payment policies of their doctors. When asked if their doctors' fees were reasonable, 77% of the responding patients either agreed or

strongly agreed, 83% expressed satisfaction with the payment policies of doctors they saw and only 15% indicated that the cost of care they received caused a financial burden. In contrast, of those patients indicating that they had some form of insurance coverage, 22% responded that it was inadequate."

When asked the question, "Did your health problem improve while you were a patient of this doctor?" the response was:

No Improvement 12 - 3.3%
Slight or Minimal 32 - 8.8%
Moderate 148 - 40.5%
Substantial or Complete 173 - 47.4%

In conclusion, authors Charles Sawyer, DC, and Kassem Kassak write:

"Patients expressed high levels of satisfaction with their doctors and the care they received. Although women were slightly more satisfied than men, other patient characteristics such as level of education, income, employment status or previous chiropractic care did not influence response means. Future research is needed to determine if the way in which chiropractic care is rendered affects patient satisfaction."

This is an important paper for every DC concerned with patient satisfaction. To obtain a complete reprint of this 8-page report, please contact: Charles E. Sawyer, DC, Northwestern College of Chiropractic, 2501 West 84th Street, Bloomington, MN 55431

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