

## Outpatient satisfaction in four public hospitals of Cyprus

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**Objective:** The aim of this study was to measure and compare levels of patient satisfaction by services provided by the outpatient departments in four public hospitals of Cyprus: Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaka and Paphos.

**Method:** Satisfaction was measured using a five-level Likert scale in which one represented “complete agreement” and five “complete disagreement”. Both overall as well as satisfaction with specific aspects of services/care were measured. The sample comprised of 761 patients in the outpatient departments of the hospitals, obtained by systematic sampling. The interviews took place in the period December 2008 - February 2009.

**Results:** Based on the findings of the present study, the highest percentage of users of the outpatient services (61,8%) are satisfied with the services they receive. The users of the Paphos, Nicosia and Larnaka hospitals have higher rates of total satisfaction with 69,6%, 69,5% and 62,8%, compared to 52,8% in Limassol. Across hospitals there is particularly high acceptance of the behaviour and the professionalism of the outpatient services personnel, particularly of the medical and nursing personnel. The related mean value in the pan-cyprian sample, ranges from 3,56 - 4,20, with 5 being the highest level of satisfaction. A high score is also expressed for communication and quality of instructions, with a mean value that ranges from 3,82 - 4,01. Medical work, whether it concerns the provision of information or the therapeutic processes, has been indicated as the most important factor that influences Cypriot patient’s satisfaction. The highest scores in most questions were observed in Paphos hospital followed by the Nicosia hospital while the Larnaka and Limassol hospitals received consistently lower scores.

Certain areas were identified which require qualitative improvement, namely the responsiveness of and access to outpatient services. These questions records significant rates of dissatisfaction with a mean value that ranges from 2,59 – 3,81 across hospitals. Higher rates of dissatisfaction are recorded in all hospitals in the questions concerning the finding of a car parking place and the time of waiting for an appointment, both up to the day of examination and in the waiting-room on the day of examination.

In addition, while users of outpatient services are quite satisfied with the infrastructure and the areas of outpatient departments a source of dissatisfaction is the difficulty in finding a seat.

**Conclusion:** The overall evaluation of outpatient services in all four hospitals is relatively high. It appears however that there are problems for which corrective measures should be taken, so that services that patients receive are characterized by high quality.