

# CLIENTS'/PATIENTS' SATISFACTION IN CONTEXT OF MEDICAL SERVICES QUALITY

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## Abstract

Maintenance of acquired earlier customers is becoming already the pivotal problem in conditions of stronger rivalry. Their trust in the deliverer and systematically repeated purchases are the sign of efficiency of marketing actions taken up by the company. The satisfaction and buyers' loyalty are becoming the gauge of success. It was showed in the article how important is patient's satisfaction in the estimation of the medical services quality.

**Key words:** human resource management, satisfaction, medical services, patient, quality.

**Classification JEL:** M12 – Personnel Management

## 1. Introduction

The satisfaction is very subjective feeling and depends on the buyer's personal features. Every customer realizes in other words, has different requirements and in other words perceives the value of the product [Nieżurawski – Witkowska, 2007, p. 31 – 35].

The satisfaction term is deriving from Latin words: *saris* – sufficiently and *facere* – to do. He means and so to do something satisfactorily that is to fulfill, to cover stand-bies [Burda, 2003, p. 34]. A quality of medical services is tied with the satisfaction that is perceived different by the patient and the worker of the health care. Dissimilarities in perceiving the quality by the worker and the patient of the health care centers were presented in the figure 1.

In servant understanding quality of the health care this is the proper therapeutic behaviour, consistent with current medical knowledge, efficacious and effective, safe and wielded at the right time.

However, quality from the point of taking provision this is availability of services, sufficient information, health education, good communication with doctors and nurses, respect as well as the protectiveness shown to the patient, co-ordination and continuity of the treatment process and the satisfaction (level of received maintenance in the confrontation with expectations) [Burda, 2003, p. 35]. The effect of all activities of medical centres should be therefore satisfying patients.

The quality of medical services requires assurances excellent, consistent with standards determined on the high level, realization working of the medical centre in a few basic spheres presented in the figure 2. Presented spheres have influence on the satisfaction both the client/patient and the worker.

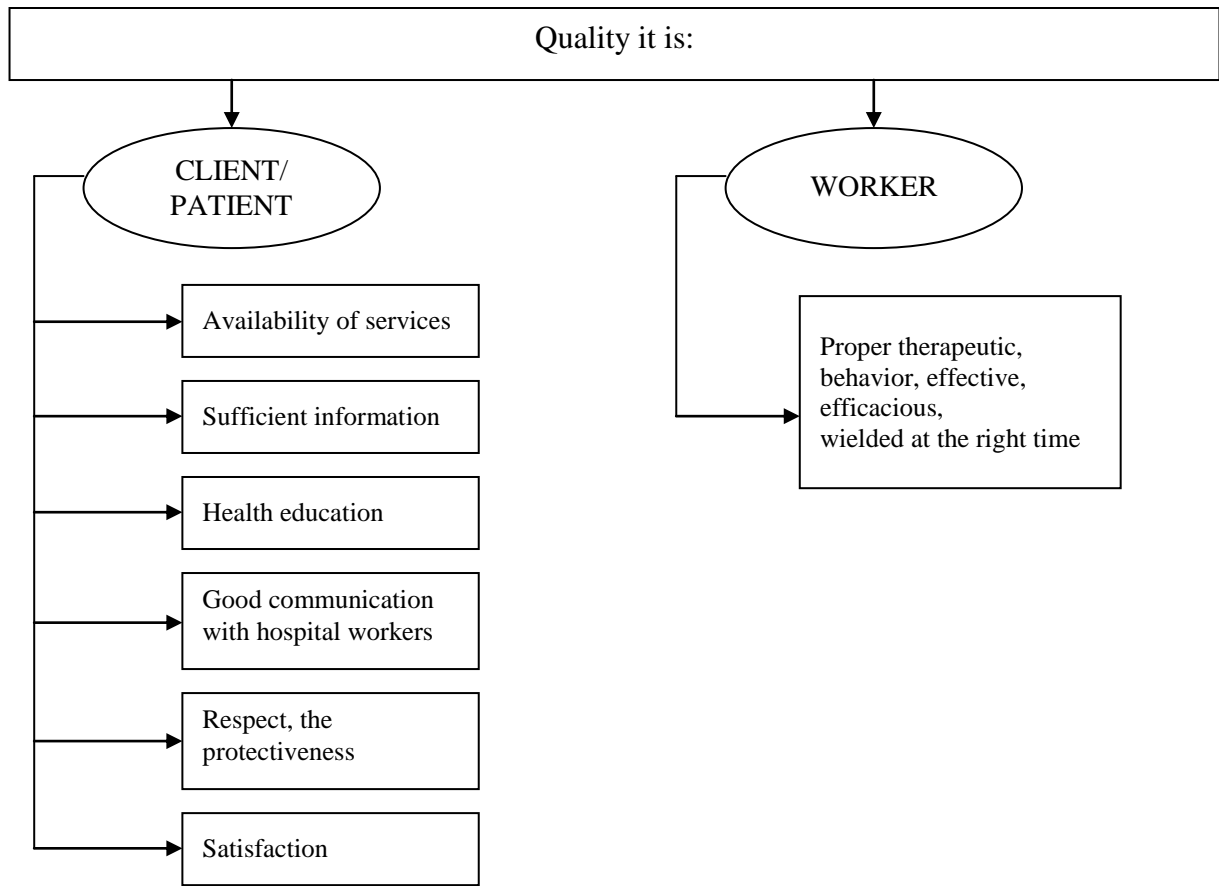


Figure 1: Perceiving the quality by the patient and the worker of the health care  
 Source: Own study

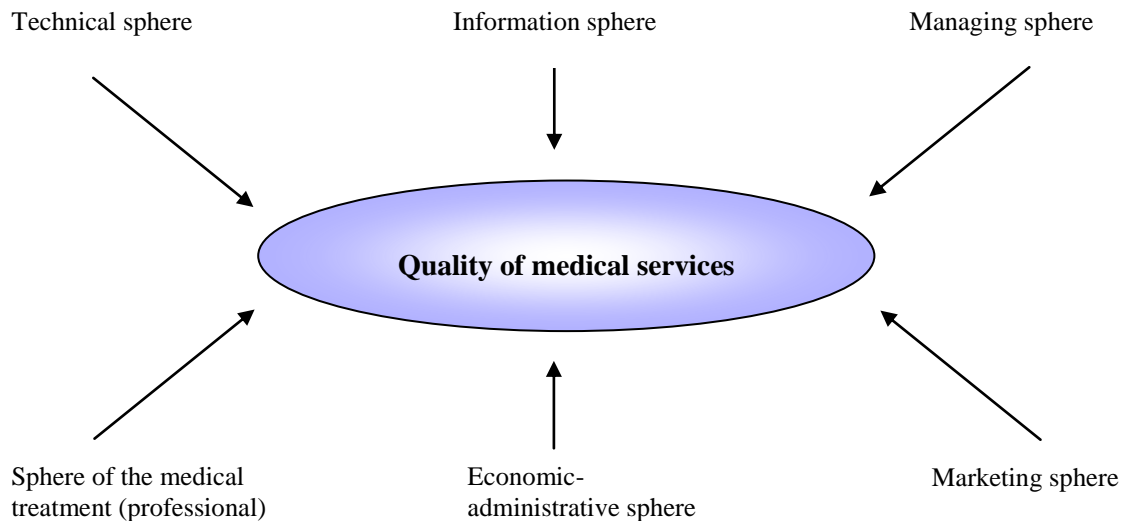


Figure 2: Spheres of the quality in the medical service  
 Source: Opolski, K. – Szemborska, E.: Sfery zarządzania jakością w służbie zdrowia. Antidotum 9/1997

## 2. Patient's satisfaction

The satisfaction is understood as the emotional state showing up at the buyer while making comparative processes by him. Client/patient is confronting one's experience after the provision services with stand-bies, wishes, individual standards or the determined pattern of the estimation. If this expectation are fulfilled or exceeded, client/patient realizes the satisfaction from delivered service to him [Gierl – Höser, 1992, p. 12]. It is possible so to say now, that satisfaction is the level of providing for the buyer's stand-bies by the given service or product [Lisowski, 1999, p. 16 – 18].

At grounds for the client's/patient satisfaction are lying three elements:

- Quickness of the reaction to needs for the client/patient.
- Reliability and the quality of service.
- Proper relations.

The effect of all companies activities should be clients'/patients' satisfying through the realization of each stages it claiming presented in the figure 3.



*Figure 3: Stages of client's satisfaction investigation*

Source: Own study basis on: Niezurawski L., Witkowska J.: Pojęcie satysfakcji klienta. Problemy Jakości 7/2007

The customer's satisfaction is the condition for reaching success by the organization, but as the quality, is not often the enough condition. The satisfaction is the client's/patient's feeling after using the service, contains, and so much emotional substance, so is being analyzed from the internal perspective – personal experience [Otto, 1999, p. 6 – 13]. Many factors are influencing on the satisfaction as the like so far experience of the customer, age, the level of wealth as well as personality [Dziekoński, 2004, p. 6 – 13; Rosak, 2006, p. 45]. Factors causing customers' satisfaction and at the same time increasing the market share were presented in the figure 4.

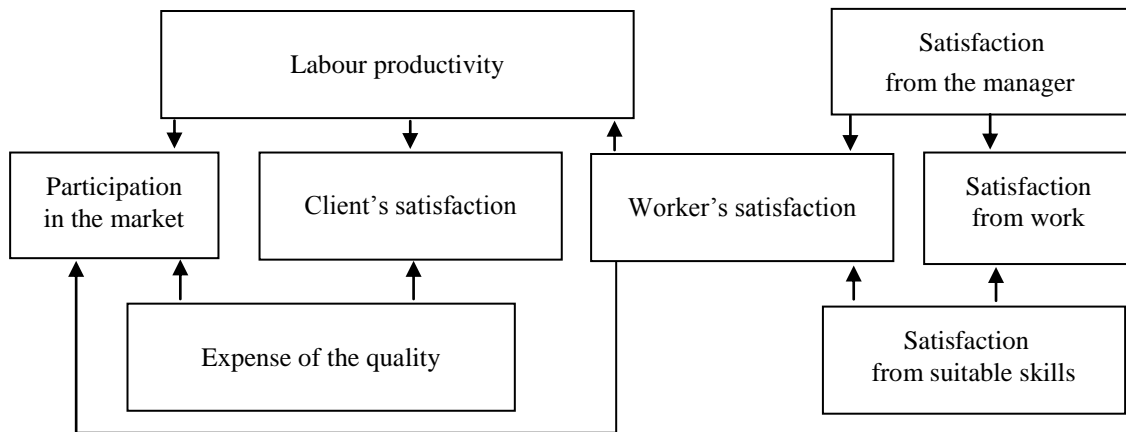


Figure 4: Factors causing customers' satisfaction and increasing the market share

Source: Brown, S. A.: Strategiczne podejście do klientów. Warszawa. PWE. 2003

Also an improvement in the internal structure of services, the improvement in workers' satisfaction, the improvement in the internally defined quality are being adjusted to the improvement in effects (figure 5).

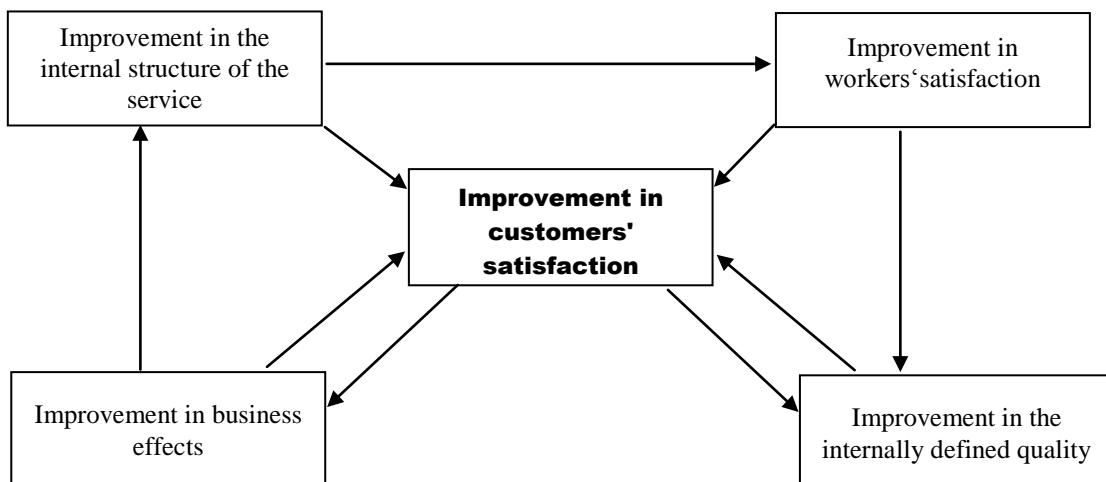


Fig. 5. The loop of dependence and couplings.

Source: Dahlgard, J. J. – Kristesen, K. – Kanji, G. K.: Podstawy zarządzania jakością. Warszawa. PWN. 2000

### 3. Characteristic of the investigation

Examinations were carried out with questionnaire method – Servqual method [Rosak, 2006, p. 98; Borkowski – Čorejová, 2004, p. 92; Stasiak–Betlejewska, 2008, p. 234], among 20 patients of hospital possessing I mark of the reference [Rosak, 2006, p. 111]. The hospital is located in the area of the Silesian province. The analysis of collected data of the questionnaire is taking place in a few stages:

A.) Testing the dissimilarity between the next point manner stand-bies but with observations expressed according to the pattern:

$$S = P - O$$

Where: S – Servqual result  
 P – perceiving the service by customer (sum of each observation/number % of respondents)  
 O – anticipating of customers with respect to service(sum of each respondents' expectations/number).

B.) Calculating the average for the dissimilarity of points in everyone from analyzed areas. Obtained effects to sum again and divide by the number of analyzed areas. A total arithmetic measure of the services quality is the effect of the procedure according to three steps enumerated higher. The next steps of the analysis are permitting also for counting the total weighed measure of services quality.

C.) Data obtained from the 2 step it is necessary to multiply by weights assigned to each area of the quality included in the third part of questionnaire. The obtained effect being the product of arithmetic measures for each of quality service areas and weights assigned to them is called with name of the Servqual weighted average.

D.) Obtained weighted averages from each area it is necessary to add and to divide by the number of subjects reviewed to the analysis.

#### 4. Analysis of obtained results of examinations

Patients' expectations towards medical services were presented in the figure 6a, however, perceiving the quality of medical services from the point of patients' view of the analyzed hospital were presented in the 6b figure.

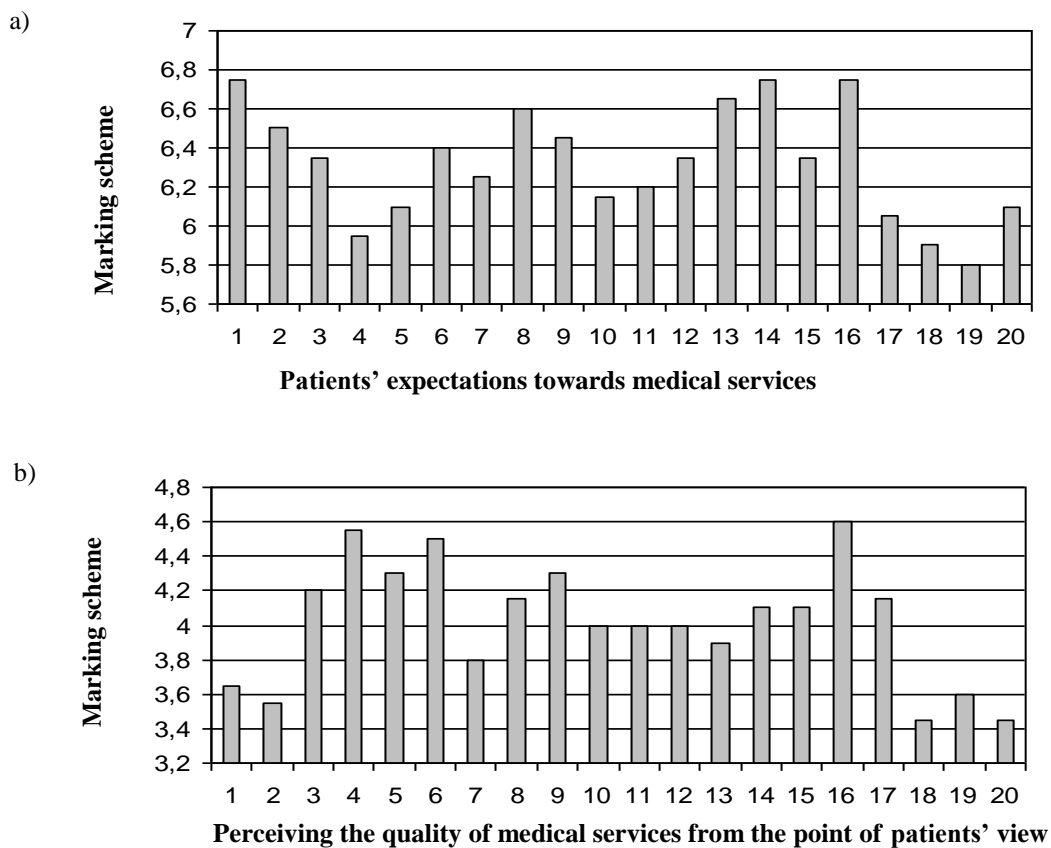


Figure 6: Quality of medical services determinants from the patient's view:

a) patients' expectations towards medical services, b) perceiving the quality of medical services

Source: Own study

Where:  $Y_1$  – modernization of the equipment,  $Y_2$  – attractiveness of the halls to sick people,  $Y_3$  – cleanness and personnel's neatness,  $Y_4$  – keeping promises put together,  $Y_5$  – availability,  $Y_6$  – reliability,  $Y_7$  – duration,  $Y_8$  – looking after of the patient's opinions,  $Y_9$  – safety,  $Y_{10}$  – ability of help for patients,  $Y_{11}$  – engagement of personnel,  $Y_{12}$  – recognizing of needs for patients,  $Y_{13}$  – protection,  $Y_{14}$  – honesty,  $Y_{15}$  – personnel's responsibility,  $Y_{16}$  – communication,  $Y_{17}$  – understanding peculiar needs for patients,  $Y_{18}$  – individual approach to the patient,  $Y_{19}$  – recognizing constants and loyal patients,  $Y_{20}$  – politeness.

It can be seen from the figure 6a that the biggest expectations patients have towards modernity of the equipment, honesty and communicativeness of the medical staff, however, lowest towards recognizing constants and loyal customers. It can be seen from the figure 6b that patients feel the satisfaction towards determinants of that have high stand-bies. It is personnel's communicativeness. Unfortunately remaining determinants that are deciding about the quality of medical services in patients' feelings and the same about their satisfaction, weren't estimated high. There are modernity of the equipment and honesty.

## 5. Summary

Results of examinations and their analysis showed that customers of XXI century required to provide their needs in better, quicker and cheaper way. It requires from market participants the continuous examination the level of customers' satisfaction. This information is serving for identification of needs for customers and taking up serving activities for providing them. In accordance to the principle „if you are able to measure something you are able to control it”, a lot of methods were elaborated, thanks to that an estimation of the level of customers' satisfaction is possible from the method and the quality of products and services offered them.

A key to the improvement in the situation of every company and it's workers' ability to creating the value, for that customers want and they are able to pay. All members of the health centre team have to have consciousness of the fact that the service on that is the buyer missing has no value irrespective of the quantity of work, money and expenditure used up for it preparation. Keeping the centre offer many of such services, it is non-productive and harmful for centre [Bukowska–Piestrzyńska – Fijałkowska, 2007, p. 32 – 35].

It was stated, that if basic patient's expectations will not be fulfilled, other elements of the customer's environment will be influencing on the level of the patient's satisfaction in the much smaller level. Infrastructure, at least important, will get in its consciousness less importance meaning when is filling by qualified, reliable and willing for the interaction with the person's patients, existence about determining essence and functioning of the health-care institution.

It is important, that if „we will promise the patient something that will not be able to assure, we will make that the level of the patient's stand-bies increase this way that even when we will deliver the service on the high level, patient will be unsatisfied” [Wojciechowski, 2007, p. 65].

The analysis of the patient's satisfaction is the art of the search for skillful solutions, embracing with one's range broad spectrum of factors, having the direct relationship of the organization to patients' feelings and the objective self-assessment under the corner of building correct relations with them [Wojciechowski, 2007, p. 66].

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