

# Determination of the Satisfaction Level in Nursing Services of Patients Who Were Hospitalized in Erzinçan State Hospital

## Erzinçan Devlet Hastanesinde Yatan Hastaların Hemşirelik Bakımından Memnuniyet Düzeylerinin Belirlenmesi

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**ABSTRACT Objective:** This study was conducted to determine patients' satisfaction with nursing care and influential factors. **Material and Methods:** This descriptive cross-sectional study was performed with 298 inpatients at Erzinçan State Hospital's internal diseases and surgical units in March and May 2006. Inclusion criteria were being at the age of 18 or over, being able to communicate and cooperate with the researchers, having been hospitalized for at least 2 nights, being conscious, and not having any severe pain. The data were collected by a questionnaire and the Newcastle Satisfaction with Nursing Scales (NSNS) consisting of two parts-Experiences with Nursing Care Scale (ENCS) and Satisfaction with Nursing Care Scale (SNCS). The data were analyzed in independent groups using the t-test, variance analysis, Kruskal Wallis, and Pearson correlation analysis. **Results:** In the study sample, 34.9% of the patients were at the age of 65 and over and 59.7% were female. The patients' satisfaction level about nursing care was sufficient (the average ENCS score was 64.82 ± 15.93 while the average SNCS score was 70.75 ± 13.05). A positive and statistically significant relationship was found between the ENCS and SNCS (r= 0.63; p< 0.001). A significant relationship was found among the patients' age, gender, educational status, the inpatient clinics where they received treatment and the level of satisfaction about nursing services (p< 0.01, p< 0.05). **Conclusion:** Patients were generally satisfied with the nursing care received. It is determined that some sociodemographic characteristics of the patients affected patient satisfaction. Awareness of nurses about the factors that influence the patient satisfaction may positively improve nursing care and its quality.

**Key Words:** Patient satisfaction; nursing care; quality indicators, health care

**ÖZET Amaç:** Bu araştırma, hastaların hemşirelik bakımından memnuniyetlerini ve etkileyen faktörleri belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. **Gereç ve Yöntemler:** Tanımlayıcı kesitsel nitelikte yapılan bu çalışma, Mart 2006 ile Mayıs 2006 tarihleri arasında Erzinçan Devlet Hastanesi dahili ve cerrahi birimlerinde yatan 298 hasta ile yapılmıştır. Çalışmaya alınma kriterleri arasında; 18 yaş veya üzerinde olmak, araştırmacılarla iletişim kurup işbirliği yapabiliyor olmak, en az 2 gecedir hastanede yatıyor olmak, bilinci açık olmak ve şiddetli ağrısı olmamak yer almaktadır. Çalışmanın verileri soru formu ve Hemşirelik Bakımı Deneyim Ölçeği (HBDÖ) ile Hemşirelik Bakımı Memnuniyet Ölçeği (HBMÖ) isimli iki bölümden oluşan Newcastle Hemşirelikten Memnuniyet Ölçeği (NHMÖ) kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Veriler bağımsız gruplarda t-testi, varyans analizi, Kruskal Wallis ve Pearson korelasyon analizi ile değerlendirilmiştir. **Bulgular:** Araştırma kapsamındaki hastaların %34.9'u 65 yaş ve üzerinde, %59.7'si kadındır. Hastaların hemşirelik bakımından memnuniyet düzeyi yüksek bulunmuştur (HBMÖ puan ortalaması 70.75 ± 13.05, HBDÖ puan ortalaması 64.82 ± 15.93). HBDÖ ile HBMÖ arasında pozitif ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki saptanmıştır (r= 0.63; p< 0.001). Hastaların yaşı, cinsiyeti, eğitim durumu, tedavi gördüğü klinik ile hemşirelik hizmetlerinden memnuniyet düzeyi arasında anlamlı bir ilişki saptanmıştır (p< 0.01, p< 0.05). **Sonuç:** Hastaların genel olarak hemşirelik bakımından memnun oldukları belirlenmiştir. Hastaların bazı sosyodemografik özelliklerinin hasta memnuniyetini etkilediği belirlenmiştir. Hemşirelerin hasta memnuniyetini etkileyen faktörlerin farkında olması, hemşirelik bakımını ve bakım kalitesini olumlu yönde geliştirebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Hasta memnuniyeti; hemşirelik bakımı; kalite belirteçleri, sağlık hizmeti

To evaluate and improve the quality of care and patient satisfaction is of vital importance in the context of health care. Indeed, patient satisfaction is a significant indicator of the quality of care.<sup>1</sup> The surveys in health services concerning health satisfaction are carried out in order to evaluate patient satisfaction, to learn of patients' expectations, suggestions and feedback, to make on-going improvements in the quality of care, and to analyze the effects of sociodemographic and treatment periods on patient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction provides valuable information concerning the structure of health maintenance services, its process and frame.<sup>2</sup>

Patient satisfaction is related to the level at which patients' expectations are met in terms of the service provided and the patients' perception of the outcomes of such care.<sup>3,4</sup> Measurement of patient satisfaction provides valuable feedback to the evaluation of nursing care as an important indicator of the its quality.<sup>5-9</sup> Patient satisfaction with nursing care has been found to be one of the most important predictors of overall satisfaction in hospital care, and it has consistently been found to be correlated with this satisfaction.<sup>8,10,11</sup> Satisfaction can be described as the level of patient approval, thus patient satisfaction should be evaluated and improvements implemented as requested in order to provide quality health service.<sup>12</sup> Satisfaction related to nursing care was defined by Risser in 1975 as the accordance of the ideal nursing care and the nursing care that the patient virtually had.<sup>7</sup>

In order to enhance the quality of nursing care, nurses should understand the factors that affect patient satisfaction. These factors include the socio-demographical characteristics of the patient; patients' expectations about nursing care; physical environment (e.g. hospital room); quality of communication and amount of information given; nurses' interest in the patient; interpersonal relations between nurses, doctors and patients; and technical skills of nurses and the health care organization.<sup>13-19</sup> Due to the large proportion of nurses within the health care system and the fact that nurses are the personnel devoting the most time and care to hospitalized patients, nurses shoulder a large part of the burden for health maintenance and rehabi-

litation; nursing services are therefore an essential consideration when evaluating patient satisfaction.<sup>7,8</sup> In the literature it is emphasized that the bases of satisfaction widely depend on patients' expectations and nurse-patient relationships. In patient satisfaction studies, it is seen that communication and keeping patients well informed are the focus of this relationship.<sup>20</sup>

In Turkey there has been an increasing interest in measuring patient satisfaction in the evaluation of the quality of nursing care. The evaluation of satisfaction about nursing care was initial in Erzincan State Hospital.

This study was undertaken in order to determine the levels of patient satisfaction with nursing care and to compare these levels among patients with different demographic variables.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was designed as a descriptive cross-sectional study. Erzincan State Hospital (A, B Block) is the only hospital in the city and has a capacity of 350 beds. We chose all of the internal disease and surgical units in this hospital.

### PARTICIPANTS

Three hundred thirty seven patients were selected from 10 units of the internal diseases (n= 5) and surgical units (n= 5) between March 2006 and May 2006. A total of 337 patients agreed to participate; 39 respondents withdrew for various reasons. The study sample consisted of 298 conscious patients who were communicate, spent two nights or more in the units, and able to participate fully in the study. Participants stated they did not have severe pain during their hospitalization. According to the principles of research ethics, all sample participants were 18 years of age or older. Approximately half of the service supplied to hospitalized patients was provided via nursing care at night. Nursing care supplied at night included meeting the patient's basic needs, especially ensuring a sound sleep and rest, and applying planned initiatives of care and treatment.<sup>21</sup> In light of this information and literature, inpatients who stayed in hospital for at least two nights were included.<sup>22-24</sup>

## INSTRUMENT

The Newcastle Satisfaction with Nursing Scales (NSNS); the NSNS, developed by Thomas et al. and adapted to Turkish by Uzun, is an instrument that is designed specifically for measuring patient satisfaction with one inpatient admission.<sup>22,25</sup> It addresses only nursing care and not other dimensions of the hospital experience. The items for this scale were derived from qualitative analysis of data collected from interviews and focus groups with 150 medical-surgical patients. The scale is composed of two sections: Experiences with Nursing Care Scale (ENCS) and Satisfaction with Nursing Care Scale (SNCS). Each of the two scales within the NSNS consists of statements (items) that describe patients' perceptions of important aspects of nursing care. The themes or dimensions of nursing care that are addressed include nurses' attentiveness, availability, reassurance, openness, professionalism, and knowledge, as well as individual treatment received, information provided, and ward organization and environment. The Experiences of Nursing Care Scale (Experience Scale) consists of 26 items. Respondents use a seven-point Likert-type scale (1= disagree completely, 7= agree completely) to indicate the degree to which each item accurately describes their nursing care experience (cognitive evaluation). The Satisfaction with Nursing Care Scale (Satisfaction Scale) consists of 19 items. Respondents use a five-point Likert-type scale (1= not all satisfied, 5= completely satisfied) to indicate their degree of satisfaction with each identified aspect of nursing care (emotional evaluation). In order to reduce response bias, some statements in both scales are worded negatively and others positively, and some of the Likert descriptors are reversed in the Experience Scale. Item scores for each of the scales are transformed and summed so that the two scale scores range from 0 to 100. An Experience Scale score of 100 signifies that the patient perceived that they experienced the best possible care and a Satisfaction Scale score of 100 indicates that they were 100% satisfied with that care.<sup>25,26</sup> In the study of Thomas et al.<sup>26</sup> Cronbach's alpha was 0.91 for the ENCS and 0.96 for the SNCS. In the study of Uzun<sup>22</sup> Cronbach's

alpha was 0.75 for the ENCS and 0.94 for the SNCS. In this study Cronbach's alpha was 0.86 for the ENCS and 0.94 for the SNCS.

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data were collected utilizing a descriptive questionnaire for sociodemographic analysis and The Newcastle Satisfaction with Nursing Scales (NSNS). The descriptive questionnaire consisted of 10 questions regarding age, gender, educational and marital status, residence, inpatient clinic, monthly income, duration of hospitalization, previous hospitalization and suggestions for better nursing care. Questionnaires were completed by study researchers via face-to-face interview with study subjects on their day of discharge. The interview typically was completed within 15-20 minutes.

Data were analyzed by using SPSS software (version 11) for Windows. Sociodemographic data of patients were evaluated by descriptive statistics. The Independent Samples t- tests, analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) and Kruskal Wallis analysis tests were utilized to compare means data between patients' sociodemographic characteristics and mean patient satisfaction with nursing care. The Pearson correlation test was utilized to compare means between monthly income and scores of the NSN Scale, as well as to compare means between ENCS and SNCS in dimensions of the NSN Scale. The level of significance for all of the statistical tests was set at .05.

## ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Written approval was obtained from the appropriate institutional committees before commencing the study. Patients gave verbal informed consent to participate in the study. All patient information was kept confidential.

## RESULTS

### SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics of the sample are described in Table 1. In the study sample, 34.9% of patients were aged 65 and over and 59.7% were female. A majority (80.9%) were literate or primary school graduates, and most (84.9%) were married. Furthermore,

**TABLE 1:** The satisfaction levels about nursing care according to patients' demographical characteristics (n= 298).

Patient characteristics	n	%	Mean ± SD	Statistical analysis
<b>Age</b>				
19-39 y	101	33.9	57.82 ± 16.24	F= 5.182
40-64 y	93	31.2	64.83 ± 14.97	p<0.01
65 y and over	104	34.9	62.34 ± 15.01	
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	178	59.7	59.80 ± 15.87	t= -2.420
Male	120	40.3	64.23 ± 15.00	p< 0.05
<b>Educational status</b>				
Literate or primary school graduate	241	80.9	62.87 ± 14.88	KW= 8.608
High school (secondary) graduate	44	14.8	56.00 ± 17.62	p< 0.05
Post-secondary graduate	13	4.3	56.69 ± 18.48	
<b>Marital status</b>				
Married	25	84.9	61.71 ± 15.33	KW= 0.241
Single	30	10.1	61.10 ± 17.81	p> 0.05
Other	15	5.0	60.40 ± 17.46	
<b>Residence</b>				
City	131	44.0	60.47 ± 16.81	KW= 1.72
Rural	58	19.5	61.66 ± 15.33	p> 0.05
Small village or town	99	33.2	62.86 ± 14.53	
Other	10	3.3	63.20 ± 13.00	
<b>Inpatient clinic</b>				
Surgical	137	54.0	59.68 ± 15.51	t= 2.297
Internal diseases	161	46.0	63.82 ± 15.56	p< 0.05
Monthly income	298			r= -0.024 p> 0.05
<b>Duration of hospitalization</b>				
2-5 days	170	57.0	61.99 ± 16.88	KW= 0.103
6-10 days	106	35.6	61.07 ± 14.23	p> 0.05
11days and over	22	7.4	60.91 ± 12.40	
<b>Previous hospitalization</b>				
Yes	220	73.8	61.62± 16.00	t=0.072
No	78	26.2	61.47 ± 14.94	p> 0.05

44% of the patients lived in a city while 33.2% lived in a town or village. There were 298 patients in this study, 137 (54%) of them from surgical clinics and 161 (46%) from internal diseases. Duration of hospitalization in 22 (7.4%) inpatients was long (11 days and over), and in 170 (57%) short (2-5 days). The number of the patients who had a history of previous hospitalization was 220 (73.8%).

**PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH NURSING CARE**

The average ENCS score was 64.82 ± 15.93 while the average SNCS score was 70.75 ± 13.05. In the

study sample, 15% of patients rated their satisfaction with nursing care as “completely satisfied”, 6% of them rated “not all satisfied”. A positive and statistically significant relationship was detected between ENCS and SNCS (r= 0.63; p< 0.001) (Table 2).

The relationship between patients' characteristics and the level of patient satisfaction is shown in Table 1. There was a positive relationship between the patients' satisfaction with nursing care and patients' age (F= 5.18; p<0.01), gender (t= -2.42; p< 0.05), and educational status (KW= 8.61; p<

**TABLE 2:** Mean scores of ENCS and SNCS (n= 298).

NSNS	ENCS Mean ± SD	SNCS Mean ± SD
	64.82 ± 15.93	70.75 ± 13.05
	r= 0.63	p< 0.001

ENCS: Experiences with Nursing Care Scale, SNCS: Satisfaction with Nursing Care Scale, NSNS: The Newcastle Satisfaction with Nursing Scales.

0.05). The older male patients who were either at least literate or primary school graduates were more satisfied. There were no statistically significant differences in satisfaction with nursing care between married and unmarried patients, nor based on residence, monthly income, duration of hospitalization and previous hospitalization ( $p > 0.05$ ). Patients who were hospitalized and discharged from the internal diseases units gave higher scores than patients in surgical units. There was a statistically significant difference in means satisfaction with nursing care between internal diseases and surgical units ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Additionally, for better nursing care, 31.2% of the study participants suggested that the nurses should be more interested in their patients while 34.9% of the patients proposed that nurses should be more friendly, tolerant and respectful. Of study subjects, 33.9% had no suggestions for improvement in nursing care.

## DISCUSSION

Patient satisfaction has become an important indicator to measure the quality of care. Nurses provide the primary service to patients. Therefore, their roles are influential in overall satisfaction. Measuring patient satisfaction with nursing care is important in evaluating the extent to which patients' needs are met and for determining the appropriate nursing care. Scales (NSNS), which were developed to measure the satisfaction of medical-surgical inpatients with nursing care. NSNS is composed of two sections: ENCS and SNCS.

Patient satisfaction is a multidimensional construct that is influenced by patient and health care variables.<sup>27</sup> For example, patient sociodemographic

characteristics (e.g. sex, age, marital status), physical and psychological health, and expectations of care may be reflected in satisfaction survey results.<sup>28,29</sup>

Satisfaction with nursing services was significantly higher in patients who were 40 or over. In the forward Tukey analysis, it is determined that the difference arises from the 19-39 age group and the 40-64 age group. This result is consistent with other studies that older patients' satisfaction levels were higher than those of the younger patients.<sup>30-36</sup> In some studies age did not effect the satisfaction of health services.<sup>2</sup> The satisfaction level of male patients was significantly higher than that of females, and this finding was consistent with some studies.<sup>33,36-38</sup> In the studies by Alhusban and Abualrub, Akin and Erdogan female patients were more satisfied with nursing care than male patients.<sup>23,39</sup> Although gender is considered as a factor affecting the patient's satisfaction, it has been declared in the study of Onsuz et al. that gender is also not related to patient satisfaction.<sup>31</sup> The results, which are in contradiction with each other about the relationship between sexuality and satisfaction, point out the complexity of making comparisons between cultures or different care services in different health institutions.

With regard to patient satisfaction with nursing care, the level of satisfaction was significantly higher among literate patients/primary school graduates as compared to high school or university graduates. Similarly, others reported that satisfaction levels decrease as education level increases.<sup>5,22,33,38</sup> In cases where people's education levels increased more, it can be considered that they have more knowledge about alternatives, their standards will be raised, and thus they will respond more critically. In the study of Akin and Erdoğan, no statistical relationship was found between satisfaction with nursing care and education level.<sup>23</sup> For participants in this study, marital status, patients' residence and patient income did not have a significant effect on satisfaction with nursing care. This study has similar results with those of Tukul et al., Tokunaga and Imanaka.<sup>40,41</sup> Kaldenberg and Becker reported no relationship between patient satisfac-



tion and patient demographic characteristics.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, Akin and Erdogan<sup>23</sup> reported that employment status and income level did not affect the level of satisfaction.<sup>23</sup> These various results show that patient satisfaction with nursing care varies depending on different characteristics of patients.

We found that the satisfaction level of the patients hospitalized in the internal diseases units were statistically significantly higher than those from surgical units. Uzun, Nguyen Thi et al., Akin and Erdoğan found that patients in medical clinical treatment gave higher scores than did patients in surgical clinical treatment on satisfaction with nursing care.<sup>23,32,36</sup> This may be because the majority of internal medicine inpatients have a chronic disease requiring more frequent contact with nurses than most surgical patients. This might mean that they are more familiar with nurses and are therefore more likely to appreciate nursing care. In the current study we found that no significant effect of duration of hospitalization and previous hospitalization on the satisfaction level was detected. This results support the result of Onsuz et al. and Erbil et al.<sup>31,43</sup>

The average ENCS score was  $64.82 \pm 15.93$  while the average SNCS score was  $70.75 \pm 13.05$ , revealing a statistically significant positive relationship. The patients had a relatively high level of satisfaction with nursing care. Erbil et al., (2009) found that ENCS and SNCS scores from NSNS were positively and significantly correlated with each other and the mean score of SNCS was  $69.89 \pm 16.94$ , the mean score of ENCS was  $57.44 \pm 18.94$ .<sup>44</sup> Thomas et al. reported that in their study carried on 1559 medical-surgical inpatients, a mean ENCS score was 84.6 and a mean SNCS score is 84.1.<sup>26</sup> Peterson et al.<sup>24</sup> reported that the mean score of ENCS was 76.4, while the mean score of SNCS was 74.7.<sup>24</sup> Alhusban and Abualrub reported that the level of satisfaction of Jordanian patients with nursing care was moderate and their experiences of nursing care were positive.<sup>35</sup> Peterson et al. found similar significantly positive relationships between the two subscales.<sup>24</sup> Laschinger et al., Wolf et al. found scores on satisfaction with nursing care were strongly

related to overall satisfaction with the quality of care received during hospitalization.<sup>44,45</sup> These various results show that satisfaction varies according to the characteristics of patients, cultural expectations, personal and illness factors.

For better nursing care, 31.2% of the study participants suggested that the nurses should be more interested in their patients, while 34.9% of the patients proposed that nurses should be more friendly, tolerant and respectful. Of study subjects, 33.9% had no suggestions for improvement in nursing care. Onsuz et al. reported that 50% of patients thought they were properly informed by nurses, 39.8% of patients thought that nurses behaved in a friendly and tolerant manner, and 39.7% of patients thought nurses were respectful.<sup>31</sup> Other studies also report that awareness of patients' needs and appropriate response to those needs is an important factor in patient satisfaction.<sup>30,46-48</sup>

Thus, patient-centered nursing care methodologies that emphasize patient satisfaction, improved communication, and improved patient-nurse relationships within the context of in-service training for nurses, is very important. In addition, it is also recommended that studies similar to the current report be periodically repeated in order to track trends in patient satisfaction with nursing care, and institutions should require quality assurance programs to enhance health care service.

## CONCLUSION

Patient satisfaction provides feedback in terms of nursing services and quality determination, and is an indicator of the quality of nursing services. Nurses play an important role in ensuring that patients are satisfied and receive quality care. To improve the quality of nursing care, the nurses need to know what factors influence patient satisfaction. This study has significant contribute for nursing practice. It provides patient-centered tool for measuring patient satisfaction with nursing care. The measuring patient satisfaction with nursing care may also encourage collaboration among the staff of different units regarding the development of strategies to improve patient satisfaction. Additionally, improvements in nursing care may be indi-

cated based on results of surveys such as in the current study. As a result, an emphasis on patient-centered nursing care results in an increase in patient satisfaction with nursing services. Key factors are communication between individuals, patient-nurse relationships, and the importance of proper in-service training. The periodic repetition of studies is recommended to reveal and monitor

the level of nursing services and patient satisfaction.

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