

Patients' Satisfaction On Hospital Food Service In A Tertiary Care Hospital

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Abstract: The objective of the study is to find out the satisfaction level of patients on hospital diet. A preformatted Likert type close ended questionnaire was used to collect feedback from the patients. Feedback provides an opportunity to the patients to give their opinion about the quality of food service they receive. In this study 98% of the patients have stated that the overall quality of food was good. Guest Relation Executives play a vital role in improving patient satisfaction.

Keywords: Hospital Food, Satisfaction, Guest Relation Executives.

I. INTRODUCTION

Hospital food service is a challenging area where the clientele coverage is diversified. Hospital Food Service is availed by patients who come from all parts of the country and as well as from other countries. There are several factors that can influence patient satisfaction such as taste, cuisine etc. Satisfaction is a psychological concept which is easy to understand but hard to define. Satisfaction is achieved only when we meet the patient's expectations. Satisfying a patient during sickness is very challenging; just because of the level of sickness and the different types of medications taken during the course of their treatment.

When meals are carefully planned and served and when patients consume what they are served, the goals can be achieved. Since the health care industry is becoming more competitive and patients are becoming more discriminating about quality, the health care industry has redefined patients, recognizing them as customers.

Department of Dietetics serves food to inpatients opting Hospital Food through a professional catering group. It is mandatory to get patients' feedback to assess the satisfaction level on the service provided. We decided to collect feedback from the patients with a commitment to take note of all comments received and plan to look into those areas of service

to improve based on their feedback. Their feedback will reflect our quality of service.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study was done over a period of 15 days and 275 patients were covered in this study and 223 patients returned the feedback form (response rate is 81%). Guest Relation Executives were involved to obtain feedback from the patients. This data was collected from inpatients those who were on hospital diet for > 2 days. In case if the patients were unable to answer the questionnaire, then their relatives were asked to fill up the same.

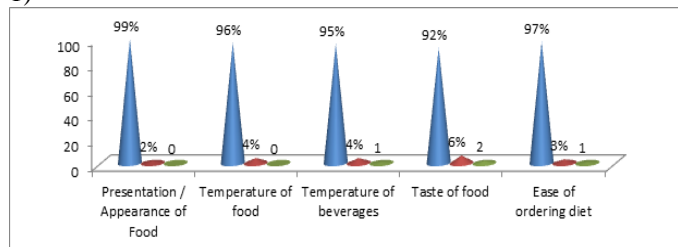
RESULTS

Total number of forms distributed	: 275
Total number of forms received	: 223
Response Rate	: 81%

III. RESULTS

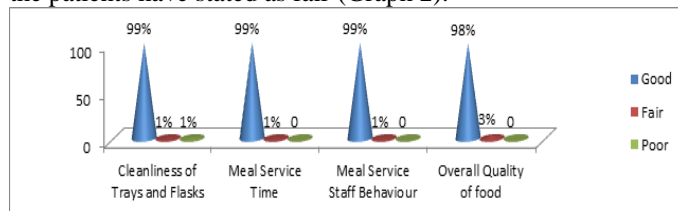
(Excellent, Very Good and Good values have been combined together).

99% of the patients have stated that presentation and appearance of the food sent to them is good. 96% of the patients have stated that the temperature of food is good and 4% have stated as fair. 95% of the patients have stated that temperature of beverages is good and 4% have stated as fair and 1% has rated as poor. 92% of the patients have stated that the taste of the food served to them was good, 6% have stated as fair and 2% as poor. 97% of the patients have stated that diet ordering facility was good and 3% stated as fair. (Graph 1)



Graph 1: Showing the percentage of satisfaction level of different characteristics of Food Service Delivery (n=223)

99% of the patients have stated that the cleanliness of the flask is good. 99% of the patients have stated meal service time as good. 99% of the patients have stated that the behavior of service staff as good and 1% as fair. 98% of the patients have stated that the overall quality of food is good and 3% of the patients have stated as fair (Graph 2).



Graph 2: Showing the percentage of patient satisfaction level of different characteristics of Food Service Delivery (n=223)

	Description	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1	Presentation / appearance of food	66 (30%)	106 (48%)	47 (21%)	4 (2%)	0 (0%)
2	Temperature of food	54 (24%)	111 (50%)	49 (22%)	9 (4%)	0 (0%)
3	Temperature of beverages (coffee / tea / milk / soup)	44 (20%)	109 (49%)	59 (26%)	8 (4%)	3 (1%)
4	Taste of food	40 (18%)	99 (44%)	67 (30%)	13 (6%)	4 (2%)
5	Ease of ordering your diet	88 (40%)	85 (38%)	42 (19%)	7 (3%)	1 (0.4%)
6	Cleanliness of the Tray & Flasks	95 (43%)	94 (42%)	34 (15%)	2 (0.8%)	1 (0.4%)
7	Meal Service time	99 (44%)	82 (37%)	40 (18%)	2 (0.8%)	0 (0%)
8	Meal service staff behavior	111 (50%)	77 (35%)	32 (14%)	3 (1.3%)	0 (0%)
9	Overall quality of Food	75 (34%)	91 (41%)	51 (23%)	6 (3%)	0 (0%)

Table 1: Percentage analysis of patients responses (n=223)

Description	Mean	St. Dev
Presentation / appearance of food	4.04	0.0034
Temperature of food	3.94	0.0035
Temperature of beverages (coffee / tea /	3.82	0.0037

milk / soup)		
Taste of food	3.70	0.0039
Ease of ordering your diet	4.13	0.0038
Cleanliness of the Tray & Flasks	4.25	0.0033
Meal Service time	4.24	0.0034
Meal service staff behavior	4.32	0.0034
Overall quality of Food	4.05	0.0036

Table 2: Statistical Analysis of the private responses (n=223)

IV. DISCUSSION

Patient feedback plays an important role to evaluate the quality of service rendered. 99% of the patients have stated that presentation and appearance of the food sent to them is good. 96% of the patients have stated that the temperature of food is good and 4% have stated as fair. 95% of the patients have stated that temperature of beverages is good and 4% have stated as fair and 1% has rated as poor. 92% of the patients have stated that the taste of the food served to them was good, 6% have stated as fair and 2% as poor. 97% of the patients have stated that diet ordering facility was good and 3% stated as fair. 99% of the patients have stated that the cleanliness of the flask is good. 99% of the patients have stated meal service time as good. 99% of the patients have stated that the behaviour of service staff as good and 1% as fair. 98% of the patients have stated that the overall quality of food is good and 3% of the patients have stated as fair.

To achieve this results lot of efforts have been put into place. In our hospital, hospital food is not compulsory. Inpatients who wish to avail hospital diet can order hospital diet. Nursing staff orients about hospital diet to the patients getting hospitalized. Once the patient informs the nursing staff about their requirement of hospital diet, the order is sent online to the department. The dietitians will visit the patients on hospital diet within 24 hours of ordering hospital diet. However due to clinical commitments it is always not possible to meet the patients regularly, hence we thought of adopting a new strategy to meet patients by means of a Guest Relation Executive (GRE) to ensure that we get much closer to the patients. GRE plays totally a different role from of a dietitian. GRE will ensure whether food is delivered to the patients on time, whether the patients are satisfied with the food service provided. GRE will also orient about the diet options available for the patients. If patients require anything with reference to food changes, then it is immediately routed through the nursing staff and coordinates with dietitians so that the changes are attended to immediately. The changes will be followed up and ensure that the patients are comfortable. This strategy was adopted to improve the patient satisfaction and ensure that all possible food related needs of the patients are attended to the best of the ability and to ensure the Department makes a long lasting impression to the patients.

V. CONCLUSION

Feedback forms provide an opportunity to the patients on hospital diet give their opinion about the quality of food they receive. Feedback form can be utilized as a tool for assessment

of performance and a guide for improvement. It is heartening to note that 98% of the patients are satisfied with the food service.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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