



## Original Article

Primary Caregivers Satisfaction and its Related Factors in Home Health Care Services<sup>†</sup>Shu-Ping Wei<sup>1</sup>, Shou-Chuan Shih<sup>2,3</sup>, Shu-Chuan Lin<sup>1,3\*</sup>, Chih-Ju Liu<sup>4</sup>, Ying-Wen Lu<sup>1</sup>, Wen-Ling Chang<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup> Department of Nursing, Telehealth and Homecare Center, Mackay Memorial Hospital, <sup>2</sup> Division of Gastroenterology, Department of Internal Medicine, Health Evaluation Center, Mackay Memorial Hospital, <sup>3</sup> Mackay Medicine, Nursing and Management College, <sup>4</sup> Department of Psychiatry, Mackay Memorial Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan.

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## SUMMARY

**Background:** This study examined the satisfaction of primary caregivers of home health care services and its related factors.**Methods:** The design of the questionnaire was based on the concept of PZB service quality with SERVQUAL scale. The content of the questionnaire was divided into the expectations and actual perceptions of the home health care service with six dimensions, including reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and information giving, as well as the overall satisfaction. The questionnaire was mailed to the primary caregivers. A total of 146 valid questionnaires were obtained. **Results:** The mean age of the patients is 79.7 years. The mean total score of the primary caregivers on expected service level is 27.38 (standard deviation = 3.02, total score = 30) and 27.62 (standard deviation = 3.13, total = 30) for the actual perception. The primary caregivers showed a significantly higher score of perceived performances in the variables of home health care nurses being reliable, informing when to provide services, and being kind and friendly but had significantly lower score of perceived performance with the variable of home health care nurses completing the promised tasks. The overall satisfaction levels of home health care nurses are higher for those primary caregiver older than 30 years than those who were younger. The primary caregivers who are older than 30 years and had lower education level are more satisfied with the physicians. The siblings who served as the primary caregiver had the lowest perceived performance than others. The variables of “home health care nurses will provide detailed description of services,” “home health care nurses will provide knowledge of illness,” “home health care nurses can complete the promised tasks,” and “home health care nurses will actively inquire patient’s conditions and needs” were within the improvement zone in the “caregiver expectation and perceived performance matrix.”**Conclusion:** This study showed that the overall perceived performance is higher than expectation for home health care service provided. The primary caregiver who was older than 30 years, who had lower education level, and other than siblings showed higher satisfaction. The four items that need improving included “home health care nurses will provide detailed description of services,” “home health care nurses will provide knowledge of illness,” “home health care nurses can complete the promised tasks,” and “home health care nurses will actively inquire patient’s conditions and needs.”

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## 1. Introduction

The “survey of disabled elderly settlement” in Taiwan region indicated that only 10.27% of the disabled elderly are accommodated in nursing homes, whereas the remaining 89.73% received

care at home<sup>1</sup>. Because of its convenience, accessibility, and acceptability<sup>2</sup>, home health care is the most preferred nursing service model for most families<sup>3</sup>. Long-term care service is the policy of our national health care development for the future<sup>4</sup>. In today’s society, “customer satisfaction” has become synonymous with quality service and the interaction between home health care nurses and patients, as well as caregivers’ service perceptions cannot be ignored<sup>5</sup>. This study examined the level of satisfaction of the primary caregivers in home health care service and the relationship between the caregivers’ satisfaction with home health care services.

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<sup>†</sup> All contributing authors declare no conflict of interest.

## 2. Patients and Methods

### 2.1. Patient population

The focus of this study are the primary caregivers who take care of the patients of home health care service provided by our hospital at Taiwan for at least 3 months. A primary caregiver refers to the person who takes care of the patient most of the time. The study is divided into pilot testing and formal research. On approval of the study object, a written explanation of the study purpose and notes for respondents, together with the questionnaire and a return envelope, were mailed to each respondent.

The pilot testing took place between February 1, 2007 and March 15, 2007 with 30 primary caregivers and formal study was followed on from April 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007. A total of 526 questionnaires were sent out and 166 questionnaires were returned, with a response rate of 31.6%. Of the returned questionnaires, 146 were valid, with the valid rate of 88.0%.

### 2.2. Definitions of variables

The research tool used is a self-structured questionnaire called "Questionnaire on satisfaction of home health care services," which is divided into: (A) Home health care expectations and perceived performance scale, based on the conceptual model of PZB service quality<sup>6</sup> and SERVQUAL Scale<sup>7</sup>, with integrated findings of experts and scholars<sup>6-11</sup>. This questionnaire is drafted with six dimensions of home health care service quality, including reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and information giving, with a total of 23 questions with the Likert Scale 5-point method, 1 represents "Strongly Disagree," 2 represents "Disagree," 3 represents "Average," 4 represents "Agree," and 5 represents "Strongly Agree." Each question has expectation and perceived performance scales. The second division was (B) Overall home health care service results. This section focuses on the assessment of patients and caregivers' overall satisfaction on home health care services, with four questions. Except for the first question, "If you ever require home health care service again, will you choose to?" where three options are provided, the other three questions are targeted at service satisfaction of home health care nurses, physicians, and institution as a whole. A 5-point scoring method is adopted, where 1 represents "Strongly disagree," 2 represents "Disagree," 3 represents "Average," 4 represents "Agree," and 5 represents "Strongly Agree." The third division was (C) Basic information, including the gender, age, education level, and occupation of the primary caregiver's, person who cares for the patient, the relationship with the patient, and the duration of home health care.

The questionnaire's content validity was verified by 12 experts with a content validity index value of 0.98. A total of 30 primary caregivers were invited to assess the questionnaire's face validity. Home health care expectation, perceived performance, and overall satisfaction with home health care services were used for testing the criterion-related validity, which are positively correlated in Pearson correlation coefficient and Spearman's nonparametric correlation. The questionnaire's reliability was tested using Cronbach's internal consistency test with Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of 0.981.

### 2.3. Statistical analysis

After coding, the SPSS software version 12.0 (SPSS) was used for statistic analysis, including the frequency, percentage, average value, standard deviation,  $\chi^2$  statistics, Pearson correlation,  $t$  test, and one-way analysis of variance.

**Table 1**  
The caregivers' basic information ( $n = 146$ )

Characteristics	$n$ (%)
Sex	
Male	43/145 (29.5)
Female	102/145 (70.5)
Age (yr)	
<30	8/145 (5.5)
31-40	23/145 (15.9)
41-50	33/145 (22.8)
51-60	48/145 (33.1)
61-70	19/145 (13.1)
>70	14/145 (9.7)
Education level	
Illiterate	3/145 (2.1)
Elementary	19/145 (13.1)
Junior high	25/145 (17.2)
High/vocational	48/145 (33.1)
College	41/145 (28.3)
Graduate and above	9/145 (6.2)
Occupation	
None	74/142 (52.1)
Part time	11/142 (7.7)
Full time	57/142 (40.1)
Period receiving home health care services (mo)	
3-12	43/137 (31.4)
13-24 (>1-2 yr)	32/137 (23.4)
25-36 (>2-3 yr)	20/137 (14.6)
37-48 (>3-4 yr)	8/137 (5.8)
49-60 (>4-5 yr)	10/137 (7.3)
>61 (>5 yr)	24/137 (17.5)
Relationship with patient	
Spouse	32/145 (22.1)
Children	58/145 (40.0)
Daughter-in-law	28/145 (19.3)
Grandchildren	5/145 (3.4)
Granddaughter-in-law	2/145 (1.4)
Parent	12/145 (8.3)
Sibling	2/145 (1.4)
Other	6/145 (4.1)

Data are presented as  $n$  (%).

## 3. Results

### 3.1. The caregiver basic information

Table 1 shows the gender, age, education level, occupation, length of home health care received, and relationship with the patient.

**Table 2**  
Analysis of the difference between caregiver expectation and perceived performance ( $n = 146$ )

Variables	Expectation		Perceived performance		Difference $t$ between average	
	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation		
Reliability	4.49	0.59	4.59	0.58	-0.10	-2.56*
Tangibility	4.54	0.52	4.60	0.51	-0.06	-1.48
Responsiveness	4.55	0.56	4.58	0.58	-0.03	-0.71
Assurance	4.60	0.53	4.66	0.57	-0.06	-1.42
Empathy	4.59	0.53	4.63	0.54	-0.04	-0.92
Information giving	4.56	0.56	4.56	0.58	0.00	0.12
Total point	27.38	3.02	27.62	3.13	-0.24	-1.05

The total scores of the expectation and perceived performance = 30, total scores of each measuring component = 5.

\* $p < 0.05$ .

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