

## Original Article

## Discrepancies on quality perceived by the patients versus professionals on the quality of a nuclear medicine department

I. Rodrigo-Rincon<sup>a,c,\*</sup>, E. Goñi-Girones<sup>b</sup>, P. Serra-Arbeloa<sup>b</sup>, M.E. Martinez-Lozano<sup>b</sup>, M. Reyes-Pérez<sup>a</sup><sup>a</sup> Servicio de Medicina Preventiva y Gestión de la Calidad, Complejo Hospitalario de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain<sup>b</sup> Servicio de Medicina Nuclear, Complejo Hospitalario de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain<sup>c</sup> Red de Investigación en Servicios de Salud en Enfermedades Crónicas (REDISSEC), Spain

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** To evaluate the discrepancies between the professionals and outpatients on quality perceived of a Nuclear Medicine Department (NMD).**Material and Methods:** This cross-sectional study has been carried out using two questionnaires: a validated patient experience questionnaire and a quality perception questionnaire for professionals. Both questionnaires use the same 25 categorical items to measure service quality, 2 Likert scale items to measure satisfaction and willingness to recommend the NMD and 1 open-ended question. The patient questionnaire included 6 socio-demographic items and one job-related question (professionals). The categorical items were classified as “conformity” or “non-conformity.”**Results:** The response rate was 36.7% for outpatients and 100% for professionals. Mean value for satisfaction with the NMD was 9 points for patients and 6.9 points for professionals. Mean number of non-conformity items per person was 2.8 for the patient group and 8.7 for the professional group. Cohen’s Kappa value was 0.112, indicating poor agreement in the classification of items as strong points and areas for improvement. Of the 25 items, the professionals and patients coincided on 12 (48%).**Conclusion:** Agreement was low between the quality perception of patients and professionals. The patients scored quality of service higher than the NMD professionals did. These instruments are useful aid to help health organizations detect areas for improvement, and to improve the quality of the service provided to patients.

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**Discrepancias sobre la calidad percibida entre los profesionales y los pacientes de un servicio de medicina nuclear**

## RESUMEN

## Palabras clave:

Calidad percibida

Satisfacción de pacientes

Relación médico-pacientes

Cuestionarios

**Objetivo:** Evaluar las discrepancias entre los profesionales y los pacientes de un Servicio de Medicina Nuclear sobre la calidad percibida.**Material y métodos:** Se realizó un estudio transversal utilizando 2 tipos de cuestionarios: un cuestionario validado para explorar experiencias y satisfacción de los pacientes y un cuestionario adaptado para evaluar la percepción de los profesionales. Ambos cuestionarios constaron de 25 preguntas categóricas (calidad de servicio), 2 con escala de Likert (satisfacción y recomendación) y una pregunta abierta. Se incluyeron 6 variables sociodemográficas (pacientes) y una sobre ámbito laboral (profesionales). Las preguntas categóricas fueron clasificadas como “conformidad” o “no conformidad”.**Resultados:** La tasa de respuesta fue del 36,7% para los pacientes y del 100% para los profesionales. La satisfacción alcanzó una media de 9 puntos para los pacientes y de 6,9 para los profesionales. La media de no-conformidades por persona fue de 2,8 para el grupo de pacientes y de 8,7 para el de profesionales. El valor Kappa de Cohen fue de 0,112 indicando un pobre acuerdo a la hora de clasificar los ítems en punto fuertes o áreas de mejora. De los 25 ítems, los pacientes y los profesionales coincidieron en 12 (48%).**Conclusión:** El grado de acuerdo entre los pacientes y los profesionales sobre la percepción de la calidad ofrecida fue bajo. Los pacientes puntuaron mejor la calidad ofrecida que los profesionales.

Estos instrumentos son útiles para ayudar a las organizaciones sanitarias a detectar áreas de mejora y mejorar la calidad de servicio que se ofrece a los pacientes.

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\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [mi.rodrigo.rincon@cfnavarra.es](mailto:mi.rodrigo.rincon@cfnavarra.es) (I. Rodrigo-Rincon).<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.remnm.2014.07.001>

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## Introduction

The evaluation of healthcare provision is essential for ongoing assessment and consequent quality improvements in medical services. Healthcare systems must offer clinically effective care but this care must also be acceptable and beneficial from the patients' point of view.<sup>1</sup> Most of the main healthcare management models highlight the importance of measuring the opinion of customers

as a key dimension, with patient satisfaction being one of the core evaluation elements.

Nonetheless, patient satisfaction is not a clearly defined concept, although most typically it appears to represent attitudes towards care or certain aspects of care.<sup>2</sup> Patient satisfaction questionnaires have been criticized for failing to discriminate effectively between good and bad practices.<sup>1</sup> This is the reason why some organizations have chosen to use questionnaires

**Table 1**  
Questionnaire items and conforming and non-conforming categories.

| Items  | Conforming (0)  | Non-conforming (1)  |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Before the appointment</i>                                |   |   |
| Waiting time for test or treatment                           |   | Between 1 and 3 months<br>Between 3 and 5 months<br>Between 5 and 12 months                   |
| Appointment choices  | Less than 1 month<br>Yes<br>No, but I did not need/want a choice                              | No, but I would have liked a choice<br>Yes, once<br>Yes, 2 or 3 times<br>Yes, 4 or more times |
| Appointment changes  | No  | No, but I did not need that information<br>No, but I would have liked this information        |
| Treatment or test information before the appointment         | Yes   | Yes, but it could be improved<br>No   |
| Easiness of finding the Department                           | Yes, it was very easy to find the Department  |   |
| <i>At nuclear medicine department</i>                        |   |   |
| Staff courtesy   | Excellent<br>Good   | Fair<br>Poor<br>Very poor   |
| People could overhear the conversation at the reception desk | No, others could not overhear<br>Yes, but I did not mind                                      | Yes, and I was not happy about it   |
| <i>Waiting</i>   |   |   |
| Waiting time after the stated appointment time               | Seen on time or early<br>Waited up to 15 min<br>Waited 16–30 min                              | Waited 30–60 min<br>Waited more than 1 h  |
| Waiting time information provided                            | Yes, but the wait was shorter<br>Yes and I had to wait about as long as I was told            | Yes, but the wait was longer<br>No, I was not told  |
| Reasons for waiting more than 15 min                         | Yes<br>No, but I did not mind   | No, but I would have liked an explanation   |
| Apology if wait is more than 15 min                          | Yes<br>No, but I did not mind   | No, but I would have liked an explanation   |
| <i>Comfort</i>   |   |   |
| Seat availability in waiting room                            | Yes, I found a place to sit straight away   | Yes, but I had to wait for a seat<br>No, I could not find a place to sit                      |
| Comfortable seats  | Yes, definitely<br>Yes, to some extent<br>Yes, it was the right temperature                   | No<br>No, it was too hot<br>No, it was too cold   |
| Waiting area temperature                                     | Very clean<br>Fairly clean  | Not very clean<br>Not at all clean  |
| Department cleanliness                                       | Very clean<br>Fairly clean  | Not very clean<br>Not at all clean  |
| Toilets cleanliness  | Very clean<br>Fairly clean  | Not very clean<br>Not at all clean  |
| Ambient noise  | No  | Yes   |
| <i>Professionals</i>   |   |   |
| Treatment or test information                                | Right amount  | Not enough<br>Too much<br>I was not given any information                                     |
| Opportunity to ask questions about test or treatment         | Yes, definitely<br>I did not have any questions   | Yes, to some extent<br>No   |
| Staff talk in front of you as if you weren't there           | No  | Yes, definitely<br>Yes, to some extent<br>Yes, to some extent                                 |
| Information confidentiality throughout the treatment or test | Yes, definitely   | No  |
| Privacy during test or treatment                             | Yes, definitely   | Yes, to some extent<br>No   |
| Contradictory information given by the staff                 | No  | Yes, definitely<br>Yes, to some extent  |
| Staff name labels  | Yes, all of the staff wore name badges, cards or similar so it was easy to identify the staff | Some of the staff wore name badges or similar so it was easy to identify the staff<br>No      |
| Overall department organization                              | Very good<br>Fair   | Not very good<br>Very bad   |

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