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PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH MUSCULOSKELETAL PHYSIOTHERAPY CARE IN AUSTRALIA IS HIGH

Vivian Yung, Martin Mackey, Benedict Wand, Roger Adams, Roger Nelson, Paul Beattie, Julia Hush

Purpose: To evaluate patient satisfaction with musculoskeletal physiotherapy care in Australia.

Relevance: Patient satisfaction is an important outcome of care and is intrinsically valuable to clinicians. The level of patient satisfaction with musculoskeletal physiotherapy care in Australia is unknown. Increased understanding of patient satisfaction will benefit patients by facilitating clinicians to optimise clinical service delivery.

Participants: We invited consecutive patients from 7 clinics in Australia into the study if they presented for treatment of a musculoskeletal disorder, were aged 18 years and over, could read English and were able to complete the questionnaire. A total of 316 patients participated in this study.

Methods: We conducted a prospective survey of eligible patients receiving outpatient physiotherapy treatment. On completion of their course of physiotherapy, patients anonymously completed the 20-item MedRisk Instrument for Measuring Patient Satisfaction With Physical Therapy Care (MRPS) together with a 9-point global rating of change scale.

Analysis: Descriptive analyses, bivariate correlation analysis and independent t-tests were conducted using SPSS Version 15.0 (SPSS, Chicago, IL).

Results: The mean satisfaction score of the 20-item MRPS was 4.54 (95%CI: 4.50 to 4.58) on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 indicates high satisfaction and 1 indicates high dissatisfaction. On the global satisfaction item 19 (*Overall I am completely satisfied with the services I received from my physiotherapist*), 99% of participants agreed (28%) or strongly agreed (71%) that they were completely satisfied. The mean of individual item scores ranged from 4.13 for item 4 *The office location was convenient* to 4.81 for item 1 *The office receptionist was courteous*. Female patients had a significantly higher mean item score (mean: 4.64, SD: 0.34) than their male counterparts There were no significant correlations between total satisfaction scores and geographical location ($p = 0.60$), travel duration ($p = 0.82$) or age group ($p = 0.86$). Global satisfaction scores (item 19) were consistently high, with a mean of 4.71 (95%CI: 4.66 to 4.76) and correlated significantly with global rating of change ($r = -0.194$, $p < 0.001$). Analysis of correlation between individual item scores and the global measure of satisfaction (item 19) revealed the highest correlation with Item 14 *My therapist answered all my questions* ($r = 0.561$, $p < 0.001$). The item with the lowest correlation was item 12, *The therapist's aide was respectful* ($r = 0.014$).

Conclusions: Patient satisfaction with musculoskeletal physiotherapy care in Australia is high (4.54, 95%CI: 4.50 to 4.58) and compares favourably with satisfaction levels from Northern Europe, North America, the United Kingdom and Ireland of 4.44 (95%CI: 4.41 to

4.46) as revealed in a recent systematic review and meta-analysis (Hush et al. *Phys Ther* 2010, *in press*).

Implications: These results provide valuable information about the level of patient satisfaction with physiotherapy care in Australia and can be used to improve patients' health care experiences and outcomes.

Keywords: Patient satisfaction, musculoskeletal physiotherapy, Australia

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Ethics: This study was approved by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval No. 08-2008/10929).