

## DENTAL PATIENTS' SATISFACTION, TREATED BY STUDENTS FROM THE CLINICS OF THE ACADEMIC UNIT OF DENTISTRY OF THE UAN

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### Abstract

The objective of this research is to evaluate the satisfaction of dental patients who are treated in the clinics of the Academic Unit of Dentistry by students. The methodology used was quantitative, with a descriptive, cross-sectional and quasi-experimental design; patients who visit the clinics of the Academic Unit of Dentistry were evaluated. The results showed that in the level of satisfaction of the dental service, patients are very satisfied. Regarding the human and non-medical team, the results are also positive; however, the negative scores need to be addressed since as a whole they manage to have important percentages. It is concluded that patients who attend the clinics of the UAO are satisfied with the dental services provided by students. They highlight the quality of care by the student and the entire human team, confidence in the student in their practice and solution of the dental problem. Patients' perception of the cost of treatments stands out, indicating that they find it economical and contrasting this with the technical skills of students in the clinic, dispelling the myth of malpractice in dental schools.

**Keywords:** Dental clinics, College student, Patient, Satisfaction

### Introduction

Quality of service refers to all the qualities that a product or service has for the people who use it. That is, a service has quality when the user feels satisfied with all its tangible and intangible characteristics.

Dental care is distinguished by the fact that a professional solution is needed for the oral problems that the patient requires. It is known that the satisfaction of the users of any

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service depends on the care offered and the perception that the person has about the service received. In addition, there is a symbiosis between previous care, individual conduct, tolerance to treatment, and the individual situation regarding the health of each individual. All of these elements are necessary for the full sense of the determinants of user satisfaction. However, the first thing that is required to know is the degree of patient satisfaction (Landa, Méndez, Rodríguez, 2006, Miranda, Guzmán and Morales, 2014).

Care in health services includes all tasks that have to do with promoting or restoring the health of the population. Health Systems focus on these objectives; however, recently the World Health Organization (WHO) has raised two more objectives: *adequate treatment of the user and financial justice*. In measuring patient satisfaction, it is necessary to allow the user to actively get involved in decision-making related to their health; that the patient has access to their health-related information; in addition, that the user has all the data they require about their health status and assigned treatment; that the treatment the patient receives is of quality and warmth; that the physical characteristics of the office or clinic are appropriate and dignified. These factors or aspects were pointed out by a multidisciplinary group of experts brought together by the WHO; with the objective of pointing out the most relevant aspects of the connection that exists between the user and the health system (WHO, 2019).

Patient satisfaction with dental care has been shown to be closely related to the trust that the patient has in the dental professional. This has an impact on the perception of quality; this makes sense in situations where there must be active participation by the patient. For example, in periodontal therapy and in the care of infants. Various studies indicate that satisfaction with dental care is closely related to past experiences. Communication and the delivery of sensitive information to the patient greatly influence achieving complete satisfaction with care (Muza and Muza, 2008).

### ***The importance of satisfaction in dental care***

For Lara et al. (2000) there is an indirect measure that reflects satisfaction with dental care; this includes the psychological and mental aspects of the patient. The latter is ultimately the recipient of the entire process. These factors can be described in feelings (discomfort, pain, fear, anxiety). The evaluation of these factors can be carried out through opinion studies, which address attributes such as: accessibility, comprehensive follow-up of care, direct communication with the dental professional, perceived effectiveness in solving the problem and care with human quality. Through this type of indicators, patient satisfaction has been achieved.

The same authors state that patient satisfaction consists of attitudes and feelings on the part of the dental health professional. These attitudes are conceived as a result of the patient-doctor interaction or are communicated by others, generally people close to the potential patient. Honing and Massagli (2018) state that patients have two purposes when they require dental care. The first is to obtain an accurate diagnosis and adequate treatment. The

second is to trust the dentist and his management of the fear and anxiety that trigger both the oral health problem and the treatment. The patient is very unlikely to be able to assess the dentist's technical performance, so his attention is focused on assessing the professional's treatment.

### *Accuracies of satisfaction and perception of quality of a patient service*

Nowadays, organizations dedicated to the health field are convinced that in order to evaluate services, it is necessary to know the opinion of the patient. A patient should be understood as all people who receive services from a health professional; they have the right to medical care and its derivatives (Vázquez et, al. 2016).

Patients visit the clinics, hospitals or offices seeking to improve their medical condition. If they achieve this, the patient's satisfaction will be met, otherwise they will probably expect to be treated as they expect next time, or it is highly likely that they will never return. There are two models to determine quality in health institutions. The first focuses on measuring quality from the perspective of the client or patient, and the second is based on the prevention or relief of people's suffering due to illness (Vázquez et, al. 2016).

In higher education institutions that provide care for various tasks to patients, special attention must be paid to the entire process with the client. The client is not satisfied with just the professional relationship established with the treating physician, but also evaluates everything received from the institution.

A quality service refers to the patient's expectations; therefore, it is reality and at the same time perception. From the client's point of view, it is how they perceive the service provided. Quality for the patient can be described as the sum of each of the actions carried out to achieve the patient's objective.

Urrutia and Poupin (2020) explain that the basic measurements used in the health area do not contain enough elements to evaluate the quality of the services provided. In developed countries, the assessment of the quality of care is a central measure; furthermore, if the assessment comes from the user, it is a priority indicator.

The main concepts in the different services of the institutions undeniably refer to the quality of care and patient satisfaction, from a comprehensive perspective (Ortiz et al, 2018). Quality in medical care refers to the different activities that guarantee an affordable and impartial health service with professional professionals who take into consideration the different resources available to achieve user satisfaction with the care provided.

For Trucco (2019), quality is a fundamental element in health sector services. In addition, customer-centered quality is one of the strategies that has gained a lot of importance in health management today. This consists of implementing positive values of all kinds and trying not to implement any that have a negative connotation. In this sense, the measurement of the quality of care has to be quantified. This is because it is the user who issues a rating regarding their perception of the service.

Ortiz et al. (2018) explain that there are two dimensions to quality standards. The first refers to a macro dimension; that is, the quality of the health system. The second is the micro dimension, in which quality standards are based on the patient's perception, sensation, satisfaction, experience and health situation.

Dental care in the clinics of the UAN's Dental Academic Unit is provided by students of the Bachelor of Dental Surgery who are in their third to fifth year of the degree. They are supervised by a professor who must have at least one specialty to be in charge of these clinics. For administrative matters, the head of the clinics supervises that they have all the necessary materials and supplies for them to carry out their activity. He or she is also a dentist with at least one specialty. In the assistance part, there is a general practitioner, nurse, secretaries and superintendents who, together, provide patient care.

This study aims to evaluate the satisfaction of dental patients who are treated in the clinics of the Academic Unit of Dentistry by students. This proposal is not only relevant for students of this career in the health area; but the findings can be generalized to other universities. In addition, the results could be implemented in other dental clinics, where students are the ones who provide care in practice.

### **Materials and methods**

This study is quantitative with a descriptive, cross-sectional and quasi-experimental design, since it is not limited to data collection; but to the prediction and identification of the relationships that exist between two or more variables. For this research, an instrument called *Instrument to measure dental patient satisfaction (Bedi et al; 2005)* was used. The information collected will be processed in statistical software.

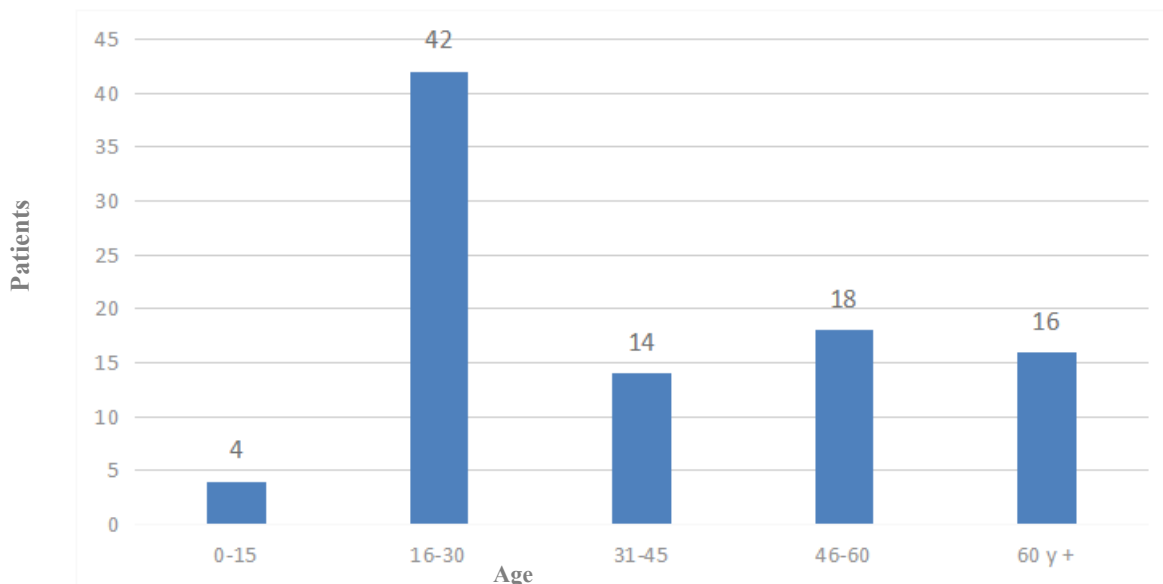
**Participants:** One hundred patients who attended the clinics of the Academic Unit of the Autonomous University of Nayarit for dental care were interviewed. These patients were men and women between the ages of 6 and 85 years. For minors, the survey was applied to the parents or guardians of the child.

**Instrument:** The instrument used for this research was: Instrument to measure the satisfaction of the dental patient of Bedi, et al; 2055. This questionnaire is made up of 19 items. These are divided into 3 dimensions and demographic characteristics. Two of the dimensions: factors related to the satisfaction of the dental service and level of satisfaction and feelings regarding the dental services, are rated according to a Likert scale with the following values (1) I don't know up to (5), very satisfied. The third part: Human resources and non-physical medical plant, is rated with a Likert scale with the values (1) bad up to (3) good.

### **Results**

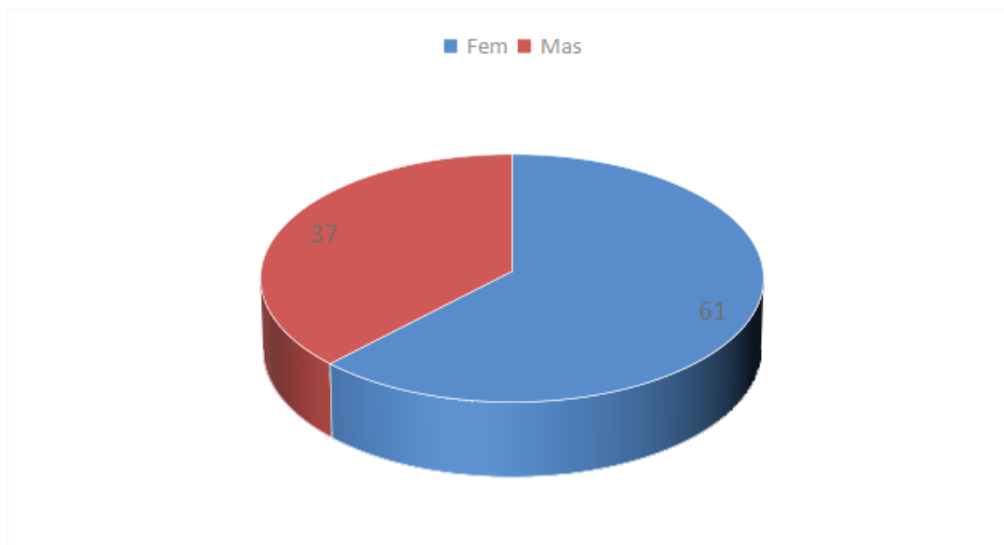
The results of this research are presented in a descriptive manner. The results of demographic characteristics will be discussed below.

Figure 1 shows the age of patients who were treated at the clinics of the Academic Unit of Dentistry. The second age range stands out, representing the target group that the services of the clinics of the Academic Unit are looking for. The ages of the patients who attend the clinics the least are from 0 to 15 years old. This represents 4% of the population.



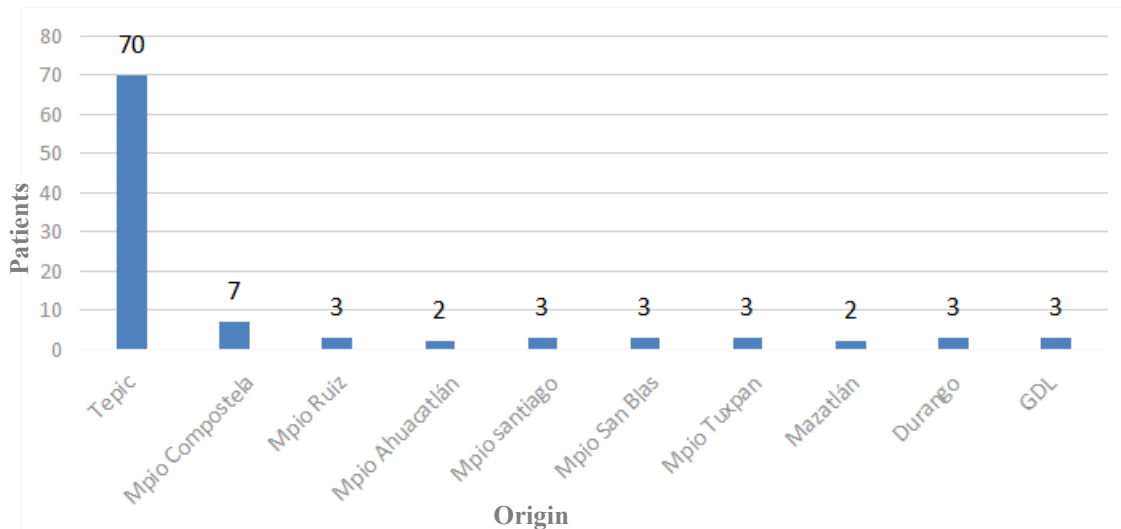
**Figure 1.** Ages of patients who attend the Academic Dentistry Unit clinics for dental care. Own design.

Figure 2 shows the gender of patients who attend dental consultations at the Academic Dentistry Unit. 61% are women, the rest are men (37%).



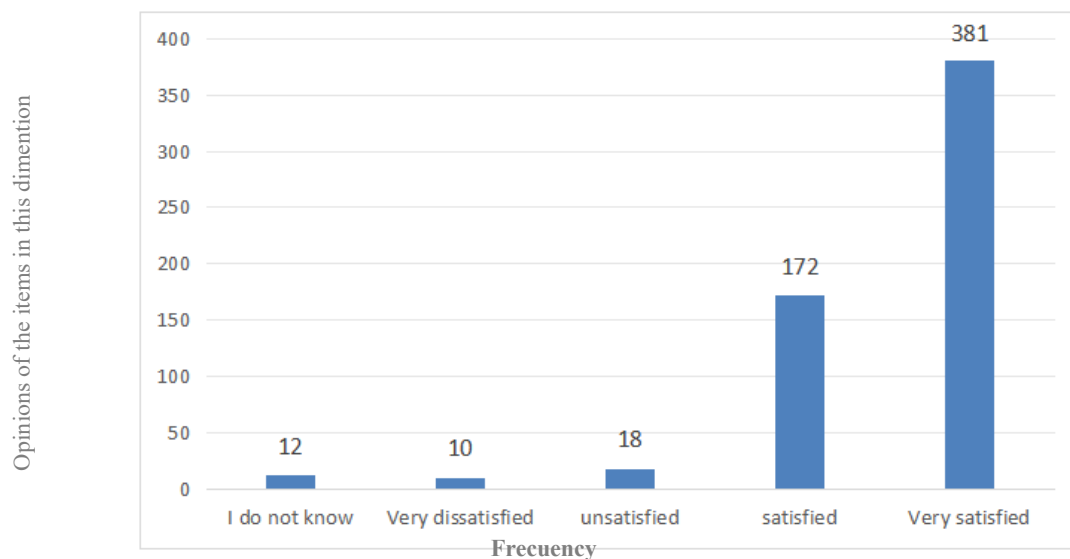
**Figure 2.** Gender of patients treated at the clinics of the Academic Unit of Dentistry. Own design

The following figure shows the place of origin of the patients. 70.0% are from Tepic, 21% come from municipalities within the State and 8% come from other states of the Republic. See figure 3.



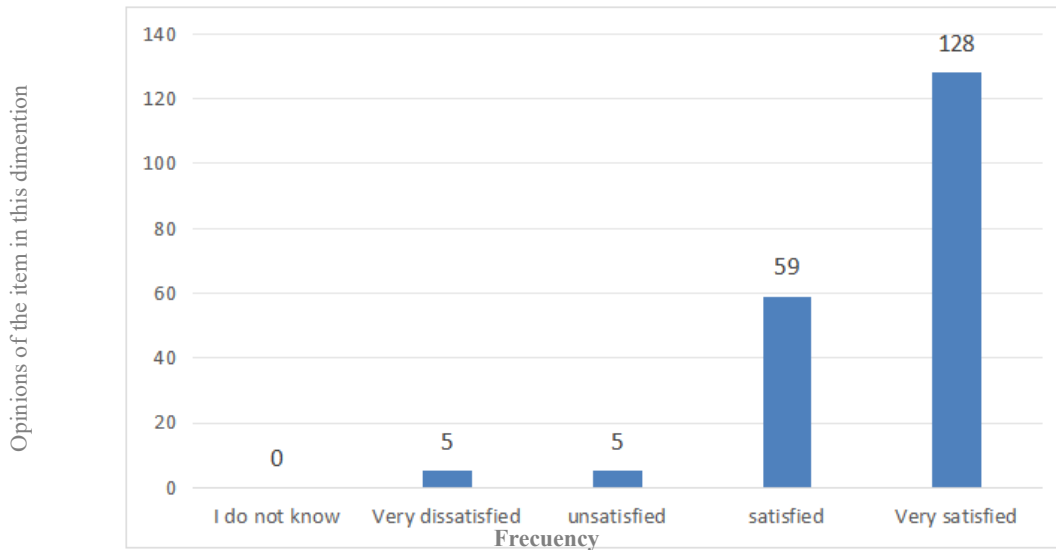
**Figure 3.** Place of origin of patients who were treated in dental clinics. Own design.

Regarding the *factors related to satisfaction with dental services*, the following was found: Figure 4 shows the results of the items that make up the aforementioned level. Most patients (93.2%) indicate that they are very satisfied or satisfied with the factors related to the dental service provided. Only 6.75% of the patients who attended and were treated express their dissatisfaction with these elements related to the service.



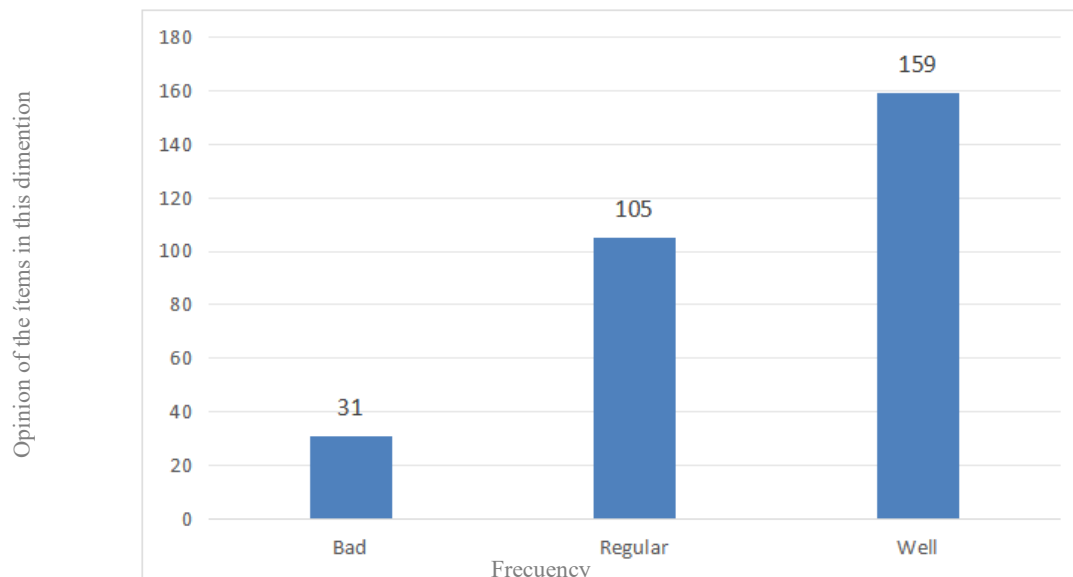
**Figure 4.** Factors related to the satisfaction of patients with dental services who visited dental clinics. Own design.

Figure 5 shows the results that make up the dimension *Level of satisfaction and complaints regarding dental services*. These indicate very satisfactory levels for this dimension. 65% of patients say they are very satisfied with the dental service they received. 30% say they are satisfied with the service and the remaining 5% indicate that they did not have a satisfactory experience with regard to the care.



**Figure 5.** Level of satisfaction and complaints regarding dental services of patients who visited dental clinics. Own design.

The next dimension is related to *human resources and non-medical equipment and physical plant*. It is observed that 54% of patients think that the non-medical equipment and physical plant of the clinics are good. 36% say that the above terms seem to them to be in a regular state. The rest, that is, 10% think that the conditions of the medical equipment, physical plant and human resources of the clinics of the Academic Unit of Dentistry are bad.



**Figure 6.** Opinions of human resources and non-medical equipment and physical plant of the clinics of the Academic Unit of Dentistry. Own design

### **Discussion and conclusion**

In light of the literature review, not much research was found on measuring patient satisfaction in dental patients treated by students in clinical practice. Therefore, the bibliography for making comparisons is limited.

Patient satisfaction is undoubtedly one of the main stimuli that a health professional has. In this study, the results show a high degree of satisfaction regarding the factors related to satisfaction with the dental service. 93.2% of the patients treated by students of the Dental Surgery course in the clinics of the Academic Unit of Dentistry, claim to be satisfied with these factors that involve: information about the health problem, delay time in treatment, quality of care, solution to the problem, trust in the student and pain during treatment.

In the study carried out by Betin et al., (2009), the results are consistent with those of this research. Their results show that patients had a high degree of satisfaction with the clinical care received by dentistry students. This was expressed by 89% of the patients. The comprehensive care, the efficiency of the staff and the clinical skills and competencies of the student are highlighted.

Regarding the human and non-medical staff, the results show a good perception by the patients towards this dimension; however, the sum of the bad opinions and the regular ones, give a percentage with a minimal difference between one and the other. This contrasts with the results obtained by Reyes et al (2015); they describe that 88.0% of satisfaction was obtained by the patients, highlighting the kindness of the human resources and that the general conditions of the non-medical staff and physical plant were good.

It is conclusive that patients who attend the UAN Dental Clinics are highly satisfied with the factors related to the dental service, highlighting the quality of care provided by the student and the entire human team, confidence in the student in their practice and solution to the dental problem. The perception of patients regarding the cost of the treatments stands out, indicating that they find it economical and they contrast this with the technical skills of the students in the clinic, dispelling the myth of poor practice in dental schools.

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