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ANONG AUEWATTANA : CLIENTS' SATISFACTION TOWARDS HEALTH
CARE SERVICE AT THE OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT OF AMNATCHAROEN
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This cross-sectional explanatory research was designed to measure clients' satisfaction towards health care service at the outpatient department of Amnatcharoen hospital in Amnatcharoen province, Thailand. The relationships between satisfaction and some variables such as age, monthly income, number of visits, accessibility to the hospital and opinion of service system were also examined. Two hundred and seventy outpatients were interviewed from 8th December, 1998 to 8th January, 1999. Both descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum) and inferential statistics (t - test, ANOVA for one - way Classification and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient) were used to analyze the data obtained.

The results of this study showed that the overall satisfaction towards outpatient service was at a moderate level (65 percent). Clients' satisfaction regarding convenience, coordination, courtesy, medication information, quality of care and out of pocket costs were at a moderate level (60.4, 57.8, 84.1, 82.2, 83.0, 57.4 percent respectively). About 73.7 percent of the clients were female. Most clients were 25 - 34 years old (27.4 percent). Regarding marital status, 81.5 percent of clients were married, 66.3 percent lived outside the city district. Regarding the educational level of the clients in this study, the majority had primary school education (76.3 percent). The most common occupation of the clients was farmer (65.6 percent). The clients' monthly income was below 4,000 baht (77.0 percent), and they used the hospital service more than 5 times (48.9 percent). About 60.7 percent of the clients had a high level of accessibility to health care services; 90.0 percent of them had a fair level of opinion about the service system. There were significant differences ($p < 0.001$) regarding the satisfaction level when various clients' educational levels were tested. The same result was obtained concerning clients' occupations. It was found that other variables such as sex, marital status and the location of the clients' house did not affect the satisfaction level (at $p > 0.05$). There were significantly positive relations ($p < 0.001$) between overall satisfaction - age and accessibility to the hospital - opinion of service system with r - value equal to 0.240, 0.309 and 0.728, respectively. Monthly income was inversely related to overall satisfaction towards outpatient service ($p = 0.001$) with r - value equal to -0.200. Number of visit was not related to client's satisfaction towards health care service ($p > 0.05$).

It is suggested that the director and the administration committee of the hospital focus on service system development. More information should be given to the clients for better understanding and compliance. It is strongly suggested that the level of clients' satisfaction should be increased, which would, in turn, be one of the most important factors for hospital accreditation in the near future.