

# Emergency Care Unit and Patient Satisfaction, During Covid-19 Pandemic: Durres Hospital Case

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## Abstract

The outbreak of covid-19 is having a significant impact on both the physical and social environment. Over 108.2 million people still uncounted (1). Among the sectors of a hospital, the emergency service is one of the most challenging in relation to the promotion of care quality. Achieve good levels of satisfaction of patients of these services is a difficult task (2) due to weaknesses caused by overcrowding, lack of hospital beds, lack of human resources and inadequate physical infrastructure to meet all demand (3). The difficult situation created, during the pandemic outbreak, focused the entire influx of patients, in the emergency service, which encountered the initial difficulties, of facing a completely unknown and unimaginable crisis, deepening the above problems. Patient satisfaction, as a perception and an attitude that a consumer can have or view towards a total experience of health care, is a multidimensional aspect, which represents a vital key marker for the quality of health care delivery (4). The purpose of this study is to assess patient's satisfaction with the emergency service in the regional hospital of Durres, during Covid-19 pandemic period, as well as to identify the main problems that led to patient's dissatisfaction with the quality of service. In a for month period, 200 patients who received services at this hospital while affected by covid-19, were interviewed. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from participants. The collected data were processed by SPSS statistical software. The main result of the analysis, showed that 62% of the respondents were satisfied with the service received, and that the degree of dissatisfactions on the rest of the patients was mainly related to the large number of patients hospitalized ate the same time, which created uncertainty among patients, about the service received and the fear to neglect. Preparing staff to deal with such critical situations is a must, as a good proportion of patients often perceived the insecurity of physicians and nurses in providing first aid. The overall opinions about the satisfaction level of patients for the availability and empathy of doctors in the hospital were good. As a conclusion we can say that there is a strong positive relationship between patients satisfaction and the promptness in the service as well as the necessary spaces for the treatment of patients.

**Keywords:** Covid-19 Emergency care unit, patient satisfaction, regional hospital Durres.

## Introduction

The outbreak of covid-19 is having a significant impact on both the physical and social environment. Over 108.2 million people still uncounted (1). Among the sectors of a hospital, the emergency service is one of the most challenging in relation to the promotion of care quality. Achieve good levels of satisfaction of patients of these services is a difficult task (2) due to weaknesses caused by overcrowding, lack of hospital beds, lack of human resources and inadequate physical infrastructure to meet all demand (3). The difficult situation created, during the pandemic outbreak, focused the entire influx of patients, in the emergency service, which encountered the initial difficulties, of facing a completely unknown and unimaginable crisis, deepening the above problems. Patient satisfaction, as a perception and an attitude that a consumer can have or view towards a total experience of health care, is a multidimensional aspect, which represents a vital key marker for the quality of health care delivery (4).

In Albania covid-19 pandemic has exposed problems related to health care, and demonstrated the system problem through the patients access the health care service (5). The increases of cases with severe acute respiratory syndrome in Albania over bounded the healthcare system. We had limited human resources; general practitioners provided long time waiting form health service in the emergency room and service (6).

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the health care system in Albania is noticeable. In this study our purpose is to assess patient's satisfaction with the emergency service in the regional hospital of Durres, during Covid-19 pandemic period, as well as to identify the main problems that led to patient's dissatisfaction with the quality of service.

## Methods

This is a four-month study were patients who received services at this hospital while affected by covid-19, were interviewed. In total, 200 patients responses to the questionnaire from September 2020 till January 2021. The questionnaire was designed in closed questions and the patients were answered as an interview form. The survey contained a total of 15 questions including data about patient's satisfaction in emergency service in Durres hospital and about demographic data. To the question about how satisfy patients were from the health service they answered on a 5-point scale where 1 was "not satisfied" and 5 "very satisfied" with health care service. The collected data were processed by SPSS statistical software. Data were represented as mean and percentage.

## Results

From 200 patients that completed the questionnaire, 64% were women and 33% were men. The mean age was  $37.2 \pm 13.2$  years old.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nr</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Mean age <math>\pm</math> SD</b>		<b><math>37.2 \pm 13.2</math></b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>Nr</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Higher education</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Secondary education</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Elementary education</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>No education</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Living</b>		
<b>Rural</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Urban</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

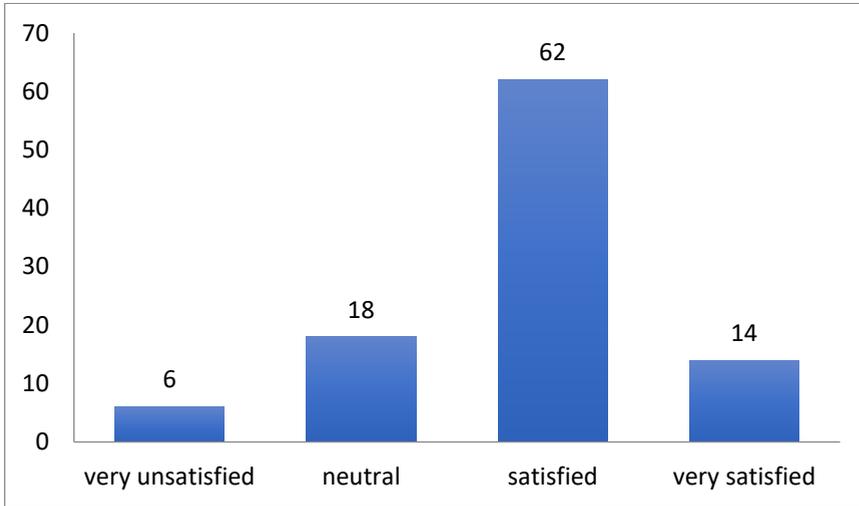
Table 1. Demographic data of patients who received emergency assistance

From table 1 we can see that 48% of patients had higher education and 8 % had no education. 57% of them responded that live in rural place and all of them received hospital emergency assistance.

<b>Waiting time in emergency service</b>	<b>Nr (%)</b>
<b>Up to 30 min</b>	24 (12%)
<b>Up to 45 min</b>	98 (49%)
<b>Up to 60 min</b>	41 (21%)
<b>Up to 90 min</b>	37 (18%)

Table 2. Waiting time in emergency service

From table 2 we have represented the waiting time for the service in emergency room in Durres hospital. As we can see 49% of patients reported that they had to wait up to 45 minutes to get health care service in emergency room.



Graph. 1. Patients satisfied from emergency service.

In graphic 1 it is represented patients satisfaction with emergency care service in Durres hospital. As we can see 62% of them answered that they were satisfied with emergency service and only 6% answered very unsatisfied.

### Discussion and Conclusions:

As many study reported that their health care system was affected from covid 19 (7), (8), (9); even in our study Covid-19 has affected the health care system in Albania. As we can see from our study the time of waiting in the emergency room was up to 45 minute in 49% of the patients.

Regarding patients satisfaction during covid-19, 62% of the respondents were satisfied with the service received, and that the degree of dissatisfactions on the rest of the patients was mainly related to the large number of patients hospitalized at the same time, which created uncertainty among patients, about the service received and the fear to neglect. Other studies have reported patients satisfaction about health care system during pandemic period, where they reported a decrease of patients satisfaction (10), (11).

Preparing staff to deal with such critical situations is a must, as a good proportion of patients often perceived the insecurity of physicians and nurses in providing first aid. The overall opinions about the satisfaction level of patients for the availability and empathy of doctors in the hospital were good.

As a conclusion we can say that there is a strong positive relationship between patients satisfaction and the promptness in the service as well as the necessary spaces for the treatment of patients.

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