
EDITORIAL

**USER SATISFACTION WITH THE ASSISTANCE IN PRIMARY ATTENTION
AND ITS MULTIPLE DETERMINANTS**

User satisfaction has become one of the main tools for measuring the quality of assistance, because it offers information about the success of the provider in achieving the values and expectations users idealize. Concerning the evaluation of health services, studies on satisfaction have been largely used, as they allow verifying the fulfillment of proposed goals and intended outcomes, and how these services are being received and perceived by their users. Thus, throughout the last few years, the satisfaction of users of public health services has been diffusely recognized as a quality measure in many services of the public sector.

In the field of Primary Health Attention, there has been an even greater interest in this theme, result of various benefits that the satisfaction with the service confers to health, to the handling of diseases and to the prevention of complications⁽¹⁾. Satisfied users comply better with health services and with therapeutic recommendations and plans, which contributes to their physical and mental health, in addition to improving their quality of life. This relationship between satisfaction with and effectiveness of the care seems to be a strong argument to convince managers, professionals and researchers about the importance of being aware of the satisfaction of users, in order to adapt the offer and to correct gaps in the services.

However, it has to be emphasized that the term satisfaction has a vague and relative concept, influenced by several aspects, such as expectations and perceptions of users in relation to the services received, as well as the type of relationship they develop with the health professional that assists them. Thus, it can be inferred that, many times, this type of evaluation does not necessarily measure satisfaction, but rather the perception and the previous expectation of users. In this way, in order to learn about their satisfaction and use it as a thermometer to measure the quality of the assistance provided, the aspects that determine it should be considered a priori.

The determining aspects in the satisfaction of PHA users include the availability of physical, material and human resources⁽²⁾; the organization and access to services; a comprehensiveness assistance; and the bond established with health professionals⁽³⁾; besides social, economic and cultural factors⁽²⁾. Moreover, the experience lived before, during and after receiving certain assistance, as well as how much that user uses and needs the services are also aspects that influence satisfaction.

In this way, there are several factors that need to be considered when evaluating the satisfaction of health services users, as this is a complex and subjective interaction, based on perceptions and experiences. The individuals should be recognized as subjects capable of critically evaluating a service, toward changing it and strengthening it. This makes the evaluation of the satisfaction an opportunity for verifying, in practice, the community's response to the health service offered, as well as the best adjustment of the service to the expectations of its community. However, taking into account the multiplicity of aspects that interfere with it, there must be caution when judging a service regarding the presence or absence of quality, so that this indicator is not the only one used as a basis.

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