

## **PATIENTS' TRUST IN THE HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM AND PHYSIOTHERAPISTS<sup>1</sup>**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The assessment of the health-care system by its beneficiaries is based on evaluation of the public perception in regards to the performance of healthcare workers, the functioning of the health system, the effectiveness of health policy measures, and a number of other components. The aim of this study was to determine patients' trust in the work of physiotherapists and the health-care system; determine the quality of communication between the patient and the physiotherapist; and determine the quality of cooperation between healthcare workers in the provision of health services. The study is descriptive, conducted in five cities: Banja Luka, Bihać, Herceg Novi, Nikšić, and Podujevo. The confidence in health-care questionnaire developed by Calnan and Sanford (2004) was used as a research instrument, containing six areas of research: Attitude toward the patient, Health policy and patient care, Professionalism and expertise, Quality of health care, Communication and information, and Quality of cooperation. The mean age of the subjects was 41 years, 24 females and 26 males. Subjects expressed the greatest satisfaction on subscales I - Attitude toward the patient ( $27.44 \pm 3.59$  out of 30) and IV - Quality of health care ( $36.60 \pm 4.19$  out of 40), which represents 91.5% of the possible maximum. This is followed by subscale V - Communication and information ( $20.8 \pm 3.17$  out of 25) corresponding to 83.2% of the possible maximum, followed by subscale III - Professionalism and expertise ( $15.68 \pm 3.29$  out of 20) which represents 78.4% of the possible maximum. Subjects showed the least satisfaction on subscales II - Health policy

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and patient care ( $16.94 \pm 5.56$  out of 25), which represents 67.8% of the possible maximum, and subscales VI - Quality of cooperation ( $9.94 \pm 0.42$  out of 15) which corresponds to 66.3% of the possible maximum. The research showed a high degree of satisfaction of subjects in various fields, which indicates a high degree of confidence in the work of physiotherapists and the health-care system. Research on a larger sample is needed for creation and implementation of the guidelines in the strategic documents of the countries in the region and for improvement of health policies and patient care.

**Keywords:** Patient trust; physiotherapist work; health-care system.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Physical therapy involves services for individuals and the general populations, which aim to develop, maintain and restore maximum mobility, and functional ability throughout life. A physiotherapist is a health professional who manages the process of planning, organizing, leading, and overseeing physical therapy. The procedure itself is a complex process that begins with the assessment of postural relationships, cardiovascular, nervous, and muscular systems. It continues with physiotherapy diagnosis and definition of the desired goals, followed by development of the plan and program of intervention in regard to health improvement, prevention, treatment, or rehabilitation. A physiotherapist is trained to apply the knowledge and skills in terms of therapeutic exercises, therapeutic agents, manual and other physical techniques, and diagnostic procedures, as well as evaluation before and after the application of therapy.

The assessment of the health system by its users is based on evaluation of the public perception of the performance of health workers, the functioning of the health system, the effectiveness of health policy measures, and a number of other components.

The trust of health service beneficiaries and assessment of the functioning of the system is based primarily on the personal experiences of patients in contact with health professionals. Numerous studies indicate that trust is a fundamentally important aspect of the treatment relationship and an important determinant in different health-care outcomes. The level of trust is a significant variable in the models of examining the effectiveness of prevention, the scope of contracted

health insurance schemes, the level of satisfaction with health services, and the success of health policy measures.

In their work, Hall et al. (2001) gave an extensive overview of the concept and examination of trust in health-care institutions, pointing out that it is necessary to distinguish trust in a health-care professional or individual institution personally from general trust in health-care professionals or trust in the system.

The trust of health-care beneficiaries in a health-care professional, organization, or system has several dimensions. Confidence in expertise and competence is most commonly examined, ensuring the avoidance of error in diagnosis and treatment, optimization of choice of recommended and prescribed therapy for the patient, and leading to the most effective treatment results. The most important component is trust in health-care staff and services that act solely in the best interest of the patient.

Research on the perception of clients and the input of physiotherapists working in healthcare has shown that physiotherapists make an important contribution which lays the foundation for the development of physiotherapeutic practice in health services and can help clients achieve better health results.

The systematic review of Barrett and Terry (2018) provided a detailed perspective on current physiotherapy practice and supported it with a number of components: Patient and health-care experience, physiotherapy perception and patient, and healthcare worker exposure. It was observed that physiotherapists have professional clinical skills and an educational role, which has a significant impact on the development of new methods of care and the clinical role of physiotherapeutic practice. However, a lack of integration is noticeable, which is crucial for the development of physiotherapy services in the future.

Establishing the quality of health services, information about their improvement, awareness of fulfilled and unfulfilled patient expectations should enable staff to understand the patient's perspective and improve communication. Thus, the trust and expectation of the service of the institution and professionals to be in the interest of patients will contribute to the efficiency of medical care.

The aim of this study was to determine patients' trust in the work of physiotherapists and the health-care system; determine the quality of communication between the patient and the physiotherapist; and determine the quality of cooperation among healthcare workers in the provision of health services.

## **METHODS**

The total number of subjects included in the study was 50, comprised of 21 males and 19 females. The research was carried out during the period from October 18, 2020, to November 20, 2020.

The study included subjects who received physiotherapy, selected by the method of random selection of both sexes, aged over 18 years, who were diagnosed with an injury or disease and prescribed physiotherapy in the system of healthcare.

The study did not include subjects who did not receive physiotherapy, who were under 18 years of age, as well as those subjects whose injury or illness did not involve physiotherapeutic treatment in the health-care system.

The research is descriptive and was conducted in five cities: The Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation "Dr. Miroslav Zotović" in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Cantonal Hospital "Dr. Irfan Ljubijankić" in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Public Health Center in Herceg Novi, Montenegro, Non-Governmental Organization "Ljepota zdravlja" in Nikšić, Montenegro, and private clinic for physiotherapy "Rehabilitimi" in Podujevo, Kosovo. It included a total of 50 subjects (ten in each research site).

The questionnaire was prepared according to the Guide for assessment of patients' trust in the work of doctors and the health-care system and it contains six areas of research:

1. Attitude toward the patient
2. Health policy and patient care
3. Professionalism and expertise
4. Quality of health service

## 5. Communication and information

## 6. Quality of cooperation

The examiners in all five institutions where the research was conducted individually provided instructions to all subjects regarding the filling of the questionnaire.

The research was conducted by analyzing the data obtained from the questionnaire, with optimal respect for the provisions of the Law governing the protection of personal data, as well as the confidentiality of the obtained data. The collection of relevant data was used for the purpose of scientific research.

The questionnaire used in this study contained questions/ statements and opinions of subjects regarding the trust in the work of physiotherapists and the health-care system. Instructions for completing the questionnaire were carefully read to each subject. All subjects gave answers that roughly described the situation, opinion, or attitude in relation to the question. The subjects were not obliged to sign the questionnaire and all of them provided permission for obtained data to be used for the purpose of scientific research.

The results of the research are presented in tables including the number of cases, percentage, arithmetic mean with standard deviation, and the range. Testing the influence of individual socio-demographic variables on scores of individual scales was performed using Spearman's rank correlation test, with a significance level of 95%.

The analysis was performed using a statistical package for sociological research, IBM Statistics SPSS v23.0.

Com base no texto **“Patients’ trust in the health-care system and physiotherapists**, responda às questões de 1 a 5.

Questão 01 (2,0)

Com base no texto, responda às seguintes questões:

a) Qual o objetivo do artigo?

Espera-se que o (a) candidato (a) consiga entender que o objetivo da pesquisa foi determinar a confiança e a qualidade de comunicação entre os pacientes em relação ao trabalho de fisioterapeutas na prestação de serviços de saúde.

b) Qual a metodologia usada para a coleta dos dados?

Espera-se que o (a) candidato (a) entenda que o estudo é descritivo que ocorreu em cinco cidades. O instrumento de coleta de dados teve como base o questionário elaborado por Calnan e Sanford (2004).

Questão 02 (2,0)

De acordo com o texto, responda às seguintes questões:

a) Qual o resultado da pesquisa?

Espera-se que o (a) candidato (a) compreenda que a pesquisa mostrou alto grau de satisfação dos sujeitos de diversas áreas, o que indica grande confiança no trabalho do fisioterapeuta e no sistema de saúde.

b) Quais são as palavras-chave da pesquisa?

Espera-se que o (a) candidato (a) perceba que as palavras-chaves foram: a) confiança do paciente; b) trabalho do fisioterapeuta; c) sistema de saúde.

Questão 03 (2,0)

Com base na leitura do texto, responda às seguintes questões:

a) Com quais parâmetros normalmente os usuários utilizam para a avaliação do sistema de saúde?

Espera-se que o (a) candidato (a) entenda que a avaliação do sistema de saúde é baseada na experiência pessoal dos usuários sobre o desempenho dos trabalhadores de saúde, o funcionamento do sistema de saúde e a eficácia das medidas de política de saúde.

b) Quais os componentes, sobre a prática fisioterapêutica atual, são detalhados por Barret e Terry (2018)?

Espera-se que o (a) candidato (a) entenda que Barrett e Terry (2018) se apoiaram nos seguintes componentes: Paciente e experiência em cuidados de saúde, percepção de fisioterapia e exposição do paciente e do profissional de saúde.

#### Questão 04 (2,0)

De acordo com o texto, como é descrito o contexto da pesquisa?

Espera-se que o (a) candidato (a) infira que o estudo foi formado por 50 participantes, sendo 21 homens e 19 mulheres. A pesquisa ocorreu entre 18 de outubro a 20 de novembro de 2020. Participaram do estudo sujeitos que receberam fisioterapia, selecionados pelo método de seleção aleatória de ambos os sexos, com idade superior a 18 anos, que foram diagnosticados com lesão ou doença e prescritos fisioterapia no sistema de saúde.

#### Questão 05 (2,0)

Conforme a leitura do texto, como se deu o procedimento analítico dos dados?

Espera-se que o (a) candidato (a) responda que a pesquisa foi realizada por meio da análise dos dados obtidos no questionário. Os resultados da pesquisa são apresentados em tabelas incluindo o número de casos, porcentagem, média aritmética com desvio padrão e a faixa. O teste da influência de variáveis sociodemográficas individuais nos escores de escalas individuais foi realizado usando o teste de correlação de Spearman, com um nível de significância de 95%. A análise foi realizada por meio de um pacote estatístico para pesquisa sociológica, IBM Statistics SPSS v23.0.