



A Cross-Sectional Study to Assess the Health Seeking Behavior of Slum Population in Indore District

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Abstract

Background: *The health seeking behavior of a community determines how health services are used and in turn the health outcomes of populations. Factors which determine the health behavior may be physical, cultural or political and socio-economic.*

Objective: *1) To assess the preference of people regarding health care services,*

2) To know the reasons behind their preference, to find out number of people preferring different health care facilities,

3) To make them aware about the health care programmes available in government hospital as per requirement.

Methodology: *The present study is a cross sectional study, conducted in the randomly selected 100 families from low socio-economic group of Indore district for 4 months. Written Informed consent was to be taken from the adults. The study tool of the study is Pre Designed semi structured Questionnaire, Data was entered in excel sheet and analyzed using SPSS Software, appropriate statistical test was applied wherever necessary.*

Results: *In this study 73% people after falling ill goes to doctor while remaining seeks for other options, 59% population prefers private hospital while remaining goes to govt hospital, 67.8% people who prefer private hospital don't trust skill and abilities of govt doctor, 38% people don't know that free drug facilities are available in govt hospital, 78.1 % people who prefer govt hospital don't find it patient friendly, 21.8% more people prefer pvt hospitals because all the modern diagnostic modalities are available there*

Conclusion: *A health education program is needed to increase the awareness, cleanliness and hygiene and there is a need to improve the doctor patient ratio.*

Keywords: *health seeking behavior, govt & private hospital.*

Introduction

The health seeking behaviour of a community determines how health services are used and in turn the health outcomes of populations. Factors

which determine the health behavior may be physical, cultural or political and socio-economic¹. Health seeking behavior has been defined as "sequence of remedial actions that individuals

undertake to rectify perceived ill-health”². The knowledge of health seeking behavior is pivotal for prevention, treatment, and management of disease and promotion of health.³

Health seeking behaviour is an important part in health management, but this is not very often considered while providing health facilities to people. As a result, facilities for providing health care do not get the desired acceptance from the community, and hence they are rendered unsuccessful. Not only the decision makers, but also health care providers should understand the health seeking behaviour of the community along with their health seeking practices and their perception regarding the service delivery. This becomes especially relevant among underprivileged populations like urban slums, low socio economic people and tribal populations.⁴

In general, health-seeking behavior can be described with the data collected from a health care professional, type of health care provider, patients, how compliant the patient is with the recommended treatment, reasons for choice of health care facilities and reasons for not seeking help from health care professionals.

In a broad sense, health behavior includes all behaviors associated with establishing and maintaining a healthy physical and mental state (primary prevention), behaviors that deal with any digression from the healthy state, such as controlling disease (secondary prevention) and reducing impact and progression of the illness (tertiary prevention)²

The concept of studying health seeking behaviors has evolved with time to time. Today it has become a tool for understanding how people engage with the health care system in their respective socio cultural, economic and demographic circumstances. Several factors which determine the choice of health care providers are quality of service and area of expertise and the factors that relate to the patients such as age, educational levels, gender, and economic status. Such factors can affect access to health care even when services do exist in a community.¹ Health

status of person may also affect their health seeking behavior.

All these behaviors can be classified at various institutional levels i.e. family, community, health care and the state. In places where health care systems are considered expensive with a wide range of public and private health care service providers, understanding health seeking behavior of different communities and population group is important to combat unaffordable costs of health care

The aim of study is to assess the preference of people regarding health care services, to know the reasons behind their preference, to find out number of people preferring different health care facilities and also to make them aware about the health care programmes available in government hospital as per requirement.

Methodology

The present study is a cross sectional study. This study was conducted in 100 families from low socio-economic group of Indore district for 4 month. Sampling technique of study is simple random technique. Appropriate Permission was taken from the concerned authority. In our study adults of low socio- economic families who have given consent for the study are included, and adults of low socio-economic families who have not given consent for the study are excluded. Informed consent in written was to be taken from the adults. All the information collected through the questionnaire is kept confidential. The study tool of the study is Pre Designed semi structured Questionnaire. Then Collection and Compilation of data. Data was entered in Microsoft Excel sheet and analyzed using SPSS Software, Qualitative data were presented as frequency distribution with its percentage, and appropriate statistical test was applied wherever necessary.

Result

The Demographic characteristics of the study population are shown in Table 1.

Table -1 Socio Demography of Study Population

OPTIONS	PERCENTAGE
EDUCATION	
ILLITERATE	22%
TILL 5 TH CLASS	28%
5 TH TO 12 TH CLASS	38%
GRADUATE	12%
TOTAL	100%
GENDER	
MALE	60%
FEMALE	40%
OCCUPATION	
SKILLED WORKER	25%
SEMI SKILLED WORKER	16%
CLERICAL, SHOP OWNERS	8%
UNEMPLOYED	11%
HOUSEWIFE	27%
WORKING WOMEN	13%

Table-2 First Action that will be taken by the Participants when he /she fall Sick

What is the first thing you do when you fall Sick	Percentage
GOES TO THE DOCTOR	73%
HOME REMEDIES/SELF MEDICATION	9%
WAIT FOR THE ILLNESS TO GET OVER ON ITS OWN	2%
APPROACH TO THE CHEMIST DIRECTLY	16%

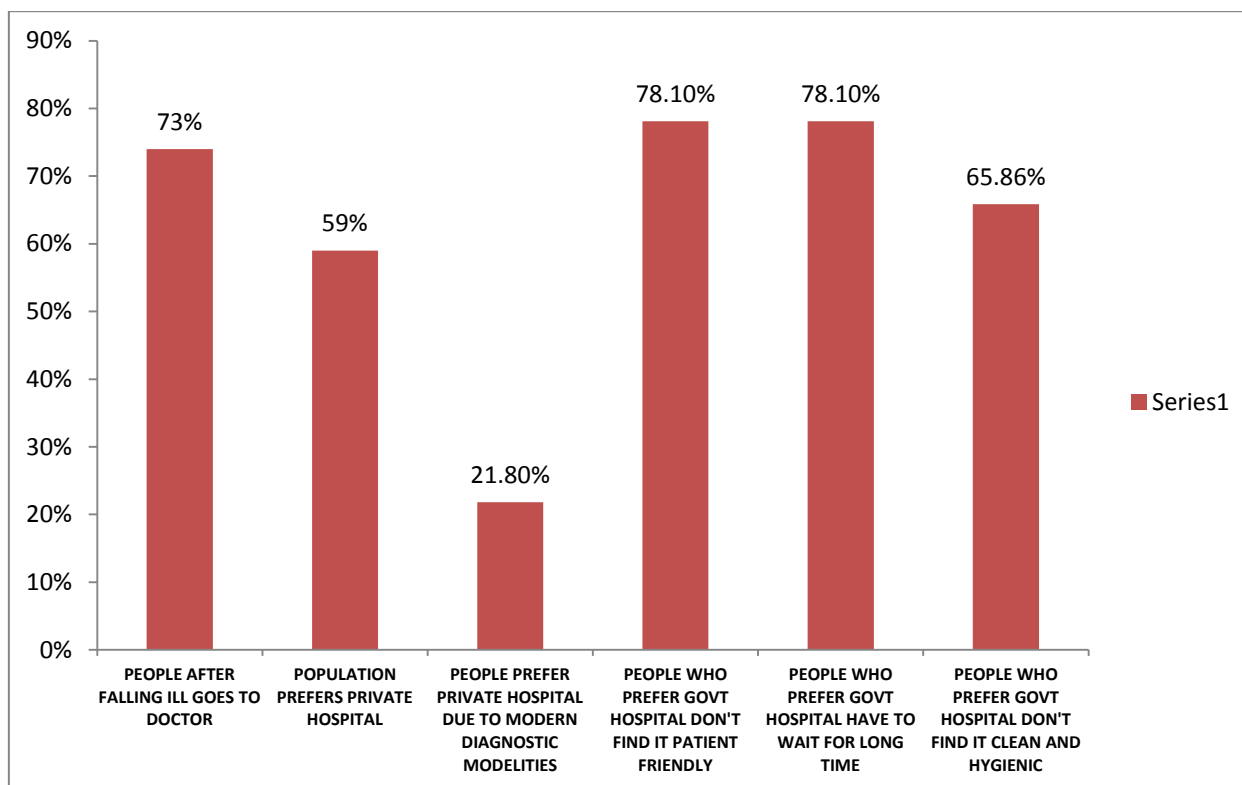
Table-3 People are aware about health care facilities

OPTION	Frequency	Percentage
Pradhanmantri shuraksha bema yojna	8	8%
Nirmaya	31	31%
BPL card	20	20%
Deen dayal	32	32%
Samagra id	9	9%

In this study 73% people after falling ill goes to doctor while remaining seeks for other options, 59% population prefers private hospital while remaining goes to govt hospital, 67.8% people who prefer private hospital don't trust skill and abilities of govt doctor. All the people who choose govt hospital finds it cost effective. 82% people who prefer pvt hospital find govt hospital cost effective still they don't choose it. 21.8% more people prefer pvt hospitals because all the modern diagnostic modalities are available there, 38% people don't know that free drug facilities are available in govt hospital, 78.1% people who prefer govt hospital don't find it patient friendly.

83.05% people who prefer pvt hospital find it patient friendly, 78.1% people who prefer govt hospital have to wait for long time, 69.5% people who prefer pvt hospital don't have to wait for long time, 42.37% people who prefer pvt hospital live near govt hospital and still don't choose it, 82.93% people who prefer govt hospital don't think that personal attention is given to them, 72.88% people who prefer pvt think that personal attention is given to them, 54.23% people who prefer pvt think that no. Of visits are more and still they prefer it, 65.86% people who prefer govt hospital don't find it clean and hygienic.

Figure-1



Discussion

The health behavior of particular person depends on their beliefs and attitude is sufficiently supported with external factors.

Health has been declared as the fundamental human right. Time and time again the importance of the entire community as an integral part of socio – economic development has been endorsed and this conviction has the harbinger for the formulation of health policies and declarations related to health. Health seeking behavior is an important factor in health management

Present study was conducted among 100 low socio-economic populations living near M.Y. hospital Indore. This study shows that 18% more people prefer to go to private hospital after falling ill. The study showed that 41% people seeks for govt hospital while 59% people still prefer pvt hospitals.

These findings were in concordance with the study conducted on low socioeconomic population. Through this study we also tried to know about the reasons among people for seeking pvt hospital care rather than govt hospital. Various studies done over a period of time have

shown that people with high standards of living are more likely to seek medical care than those who belong to low standards of living. NHIS has not succeeded in increasing health service utilization between poor & rich and a majority of people consult physician when they face any health problems than self medication which has been found in our study.

So there is a need to improve the doctor patient ratio. So, that people do not have to wait for long & personal attention can be given. Cleanliness and hygiene should be improved in order to provide a better hospital environment to patient.

A health education program is needed to increase the awareness about the use of medicines among the general population and to enable them to make the right decisions relating to health problems. People should be made aware regarding govt schemes such a low cost drugs at govt hospital, low cost investigations & less fees or charges in govt hospitals.

Conclusion

Health seeking behavior of people is dependent on the perception of people regarding the quality of

health care services in health centers. The study that we performed lead us to the conclusion that in spite of living near govt hospital people tend to go to private hospital because according to them there are problems of cleanliness & hygiene, unawareness regarding govt schemes in about 38% people, govt hospitals are not patient friendly, they have to wait for long time and people think that they are not given any personal attention.

The healthcare experts and other healthcare authorities should work together for increase the awareness of the public about the side effects of self-medication, if used inappropriately and help people to make the right decision related to the health problems.

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Conflict of Interest: None.

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