

# Improving Health Care and Environmental Standards in Dhaka City's Tertiary Care Hospitals: A Policy Suggestion

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## Key Messages:

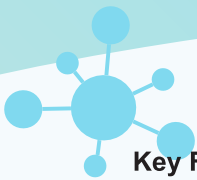
1. Currently, the healthcare facilities of Bangladesh have improved. However, a gap still needs to be in understanding the existing healthcare environment and the satisfaction level of the patients and the caregivers.
2. This study has shown that ShSMCH has several positive indicators in implementing management practices and meeting national healthcare standards. Still, there are some areas for improvement, such as recruitment, training and promotion of hospital staff set, ting value guides for the behaviour of the staff and establishment of some critical care services like CCU, ICU, NICU, PICU, separate eclampsia rooms, which are not present.
3. This study revealed a moderate level (70%) of satisfaction among admitted patients of ShSMCH. Factors such as ease of location, waiting time, and staff responsiveness significantly influenced patient satisfaction. At the same time, there was dissatisfaction with laboratory services and health professionals' provision of proper counselling.
4. Regarding healthcare providers' satisfaction level, favourable working conditions, minimising workload, providing additional remuneration for extra work, and support from supervisors and colleagues in resolving conflicts were critical factors associated with job satisfaction. Healthcare professionals also need more training programs periodically throughout their careers.

## Problem Statement

The healthcare facilities of Bangladesh have improved over time, but a gap still needs to be in understanding the existing healthcare environment and the satisfaction level of patients and caregivers. Hospitals play a critical role as part of the transitional care intervention and in the coordination of patient care. Therefore, the study attempted to explore the patients' expectations and perceptions of quality health care and experiences of receiving public health care services. It also aimed at exploring their satisfaction levels and the satisfaction level of the caregivers as well. This study dealt with the quality assessment of healthcare facilities of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital in Dhaka, one of the tertiary care hospitals in Bangladesh.

## Study Method

It was a hospital-based descriptive cross-sectional study conducted at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, Dhaka. The study period was six (06) months from the inception date. A total of six hundred (600) respondents were selected from the patients and four hundred fifty (450) from the health care providers to assess their satisfaction level. The sampling method was convenient through face-to-face interviews using a pretested semi-structured questionnaire. For the hospital survey, data were collected by observation technique utilising a checklist. The 'Kobo Collect' was used as the data collection tool, entered into MS Excel for validation and finally transferred to SPSS for analysis (software version 25).



### Key Findings

The Hospital services checklist results for Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital indicate several management practices in line with national healthcare standards in Bangladesh. The hospital has a well-defined organisational structure, a development and strategic planning committee, and a coded hospital management information system for annual planning. It also has a Quality Improvement Committee to assess patient satisfaction, internal control, and audit systems for accountability. The laboratory has qualified professionals, proper health and safety policies, and efficient sample labelling and reporting. However, there is a shortage of staff and a need for radiation hazard displays in the radiology department. Adequate storage facilities, staff facilities, and qualified pharmacists are present in the pharmacy. The hospital ensures accessibility, availability of doctors and nurses, and emergency services, although there is a need for specialised beds and some emergency equipment. Maternal and Child Health services lack a separate eclampsia room. Infection control and waste management practices are followed, but there is no Infection Control Committee, and some signage is absent. Fire safety and emergency preparedness measures are in place, with regular inspections and alternate power sources. Overall, the hospital demonstrates compliance with several standards, but improvements are needed in various areas.

Regarding assessing patient's satisfaction level, the findings revealed important insights into patient satisfaction. Several attributes of the services were assessed, and around 70% of patients expressed satisfaction with the ease of location, waiting time, and comfort of registering for services.

Regarding attributes like ease of access to admissions, promptness of service, and quality of service, 61% of respondents reported satisfaction. Waiting times to see doctors, consultants, or specialised physicians had a satisfaction rate of 71% in each department. However, concerning the Department of Surgery, over 70% of respondents expressed strong dissatisfaction with the attitude of doctors and their inability to provide proper advice. Patient satisfaction with the cleanliness of the hospital environment was reported by 59% of respondents, while a majority expressed dissatisfaction with laboratory services. The mean overall satisfaction among patients was 70%.

Regarding the assessment of Health care providers' satisfaction level, career dissatisfaction was reported in areas such as opportunities for advancement and additional remuneration. Associations between sociodemographic factors and job satisfaction were also examined. Among doctors, no statistically significant associations were found. However, among nurses, significant associations were observed with sex ( $p=.008$ ), marital status ( $p=.037$ ), age ( $p=.012$ ) and work experience ( $p=.001$ ). Lab technicians showed significant associations with age ( $p=.008$ ) and income level ( $p=.004$ ).

### Policy Recommendations

#### (A) Hospital:

1. There should be initiatives to increase the number of hospital staff to minimise the high workload among healthcare providers. The number of hospital beds is increasing, but the number of staff remains the same, which also needs to be increased.
2. Specialised critical care services must be available, including ICU, CCU, NICU, and PICU, and separate beds for different specialities in the health care setting to provide high-quality urgent care.
3. There is an urgent need to establish a separate eclampsia room in the hospital to provide quality care for pregnant women suffering from life-threatening conditions.
4. High demands are observed to make the Infection Control Committee functional at the hospital to manage the potential risk of healthcare-associated infections.
5. An adequate number of trained and qualified technicians should be recruited periodically for the laboratory services.
6. It is necessary to ensure that the restrooms and changing rooms of the staff are separated, spacious, and clean to be used effectively.
7. A sign or diagram displaying radiation & other hazards should be placed in front of the radiology department to raise awareness among healthcare providers.
8. Patient's complaints must be addressed promptly and adequately to improve the quality of health care services.



9. A prominent display of safety notices and effective alarm systems should be implemented in accordance with a national health strategy to create awareness among the public.
10. Placement of clear signage is essential to ensure public safety and provide a clear evacuation pathway in the event of an emergency.
11. Periodic training and educational programs should be run year-round to improve healthcare providers' knowledge, attitude and skills while maintaining equity.

### **(B) Patients:**

1. The doctor-patient relationship should be enhanced by allocating adequate time for the patients to provide explanations and counselling about the diseases and procedures, especially in the Surgery department.
2. The care provided by the nurses should be optimised to reach patients' satisfaction levels.
3. More laboratory investigations should be available in the hospital all the time.
4. Good quality diets & safe drinking water supply needs to be ensured in the hospital.
5. Adequate toilet facilities should be available and need to be maintained properly.
6. A clean and hygienic environment must be ensured in all facilities in the hospital.
7. Regular surveys should be conducted to gather patient feedback, incorporate them into practices and identify the areas of improvements.

### **(C) Health Care providers:**

1. Involvement of Health care providers in decision-making needs to be ensured.
2. Additional remuneration for extra work should be considered to improve the job satisfaction of the staff wherever applicable.
3. Improvements in making the working environment comfortable and resolving the conflict at work are necessary.
4. Healthcare professionals should be provided ongoing support, mentoring and training programs periodically throughout their careers.
5. The recruitment of additional staff might minimise the staff's workload.
6. Regular research and evaluation studies should be conducted to monitor healthcare professionals' job satisfaction levels. These can be used to continually refine and improve workforce planning and policy development in the health-care sector.

A collaboration of quality healthcare services, satisfied healthcare workers, and positive patient experiences is essential for effective tertiary hospitals in Bangladesh. By prioritising infrastructure, professional development, patient-centred care, and communication, these hospitals can establish a healthcare ecosystem that benefits both healthcare providers and patients, ultimately contributing to the overall improvement of Bangladesh's healthcare system.