Critical Analysis of Conventional Customer Satisfaction Indicators in Hospitals

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OBJECTIVES
Quality management aims to improve the quality in order to satisfy the expressed or not expressed customers needs. This quality is relative as it is based on customer requirements, as well as on internal and external company stakeholders, while also taking into account risks of any kind. In hospitals, quality management tools facilitate the health services management. These tools focus on improving the quality of service delivery, reducing customer waiting time, improving logistics and supply management. However, customer satisfaction is characterized by its complexity and high subjectivity in hospitals. Indeed, experience has shown that Conventional Customer Satisfaction Indicators (CCSIs) which have proved their relevance in many areas, may not be suitable in hospitals. In that sense, our study aims to determine the limits of CCSIs in hospitals.

METHODS
This is a descriptive study of customers and their needs in hospitals followed by a critical analysis of CCSIs. As the model presented, we studied direct customers of the pharmacy of Mohammed V Military Teaching Hospital (MVMTH) of Rabat, Morocco. Data on pharmacy customers, their needs and CCSIs for their evaluation were extracted from our pharmacy procedures booklet and quality manual, as well as from the complaints register and the satisfaction questionnaires completed by the customers concerned.

RESULTS
- Direct customers of HP are shown in Figure 1.
- Pharmaceutical needs of our pharmacy customers, CCSIs used and their possible deficiencies are shown in Table I, II, III and IV.

TABLE I. Pharmaceutical needs of Care Units, CCSIs used and their possible deficiencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs HP has to satisfy</th>
<th>CCSI designation</th>
<th>CCSI description</th>
<th>Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of pharmaceuticals</td>
<td>Average duration of shortage</td>
<td>Time out of stock / Number of items in shortage</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrency between prescribed and dispensed items</td>
<td>Request Satisfaction Rate (RSR)</td>
<td>(Quantity of dispensed drugs / Quantity of requested drugs) x 100</td>
<td>Does not take into account appropriateness of the request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapidity of dispensing prescriptions</td>
<td>Prescriptions execution time</td>
<td>Time to dispense prescription lines / Total number of prescription lines</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceutical presence in care units</td>
<td>Ratio of pharmaceutical presence in care units</td>
<td>(Number of care units benefiting from pharmaceutical presence / Total number of care units) x 100</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical presence is not required at the same level in all care units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Direct customers of MVMTH pharmacy

DISCUSSION
This study allowed us first to understand the needs of direct customers of the MVMTH pharmacy, and then to evaluate the relevance of CCSIs in hospitals, and specifically in hospital pharmacy. In fact, in some situations, customer needs either can not or should not be completely satisfied. In these cases, it reflects negatively on some CCSIs, not because of a lack of pharmaceutical performance, but often because of the non-adaptation of these indicators to the hospital model. These findings lead us either to think about new satisfaction indicators which are more appropriate in our context, or to introduce factors of adjustments in order to adapt the non-relevant CCSIs to our studied model.

For example we can imagine introducing an Index for Request Adequacy (IRA) to adjust the conventional RSR:

Adjusted RSR = \[
\frac{\text{Quantity of dispensed drugs}}{\text{Quantity of requested drugs \times IRA^*}}\times 100
\]

*IRA = I - (The IRA must be between 0 and 1)

CONCLUSION
Some of the major concerns of a successful enterprise, its ability to communicate with its customers, to understand customers expectations and to meet the wishes of its customers. To be able to take the right decisions, managers must have reliable indicators to measure the satisfaction of their customers.

In our context, critical analysis of CCSIs in hospitals allowed us to identify many deficiencies. These findings will be used to develop new indicators that are more adapted to the hospital model.