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Stroke patients' satisfaction with their hospitalization

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Introduction: Patient satisfaction is a major concern for health care providers, complicated by the rising number of elderly in the total population. It has been the subject for scientific enquiry using qualitative, quantitative or mixed methodology and has become an important component of evaluation research.

Aims: The aim of the present study was to explore the experience of elder patients and to describe their feelings with the nursing services offered.

Materials & Method: The sample consisted of 14 stroke patients. Seven were women, the mean age was 72 years with a median age of 73 (range: 60-88). An exploratory descriptive research design was chosen, because of the interpretive framework underlying the whole process. Data were collected by means of face-to-face, open-ended, semi-structured interviews in order to encourage spontaneous responses at the patients' own homes within two weeks of discharge.

Results: The patients stayed in hospital for 476 days in total, with a mean length of stay of 43 days. Findings generally show high satisfaction regarding the quantity and quality of care received from different professionals. Yet, when a global comment on satisfaction was requested, the response would invariably be satisfactory.

Conclusion: Assessing patients' views indicates that concern about continuous assessment but it also shows conscientious professionalism within a genuine humanistic line of work. However, many theoretical and methodological problems have arisen from attempts to measure and quantify patient satisfaction as numerical data were thought to be sterile without any insight into personal meanings.

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