

Satisfaction with Emergency Departments and Other Mental Health Services among Patients with Mental Disorders

Satisfaction envers les urgences et autres services de santé mentale chez les patients atteints de troubles mentaux

MARIE-JOSÉE FLEURY, GUY GRENIER AND LAMBERT FARAND

TABLE 1. Sample characteristics ($n = 328$)

| | | Minimum | Maximum | <i>n</i> /Mean | %/SD |
|---|--|---------|---------|----------------|------|
| Socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics | | | | | |
| Age | | 17 | 83 | 38.9 | 15.2 |
| Sex | Female | | | 167 | 50.9 |
| | Male | | | 1631 | 49.1 |
| Marital status (<i>n</i> , %) | Single/separated/divorce/widowed | | | 263 | 80.2 |
| | Married/common law | | | 62 | 18.9 |
| | Other | | | 2 | 0.6 |
| | Do not know | | | 1 | 0.3 |
| Children (<i>n</i> , %) | Yes | | | 125 | 38.1 |
| | No | | | 203 | 61.9 |
| Housing (<i>n</i> , %) | Private house, condo or rental apartment | | | 262 | 79.9 |
| | Supervised apartment | | | 6 | 1.8 |
| | Subsidized housing | | | 22 | 6.7 |
| | Foster family | | | 1 | 0.3 |
| | Group home | | | 7 | 2.1 |
| | No permanent address | | | 17 | 5.2 |
| Education (<i>n</i> , %) | Elementary/secondary | | | 145 | 44.2 |
| | Post-secondary or higher | | | 168 | 55.8 |
| Employment (<i>n</i> , %) | Yes | | | 110 | 33.5 |
| | No | | | 218 | 66.5 |
| | Full time | | | 78 | 23.8 |
| | Part time | | | 38 | 11.6 |
| Annual household income (Mean, SD) | \$0–19,999 | | | 145 | 44.2 |
| | \$20,000–39,999 | | | 84 | 25.6 |
| | \$40,000–59,999 | | | 43 | 13.1 |
| | \$60,000–79,999 | | | 21 | 6.4 |
| | \$80,000+ | | | 35 | 10.6 |
| Clinical characteristics | | | | | |
| Self-perceived physical health (<i>n</i> , %) | Poor or fair | | | 134 | 40.9 |
| | Good | | | 103 | 31.4 |
| | Very good | | | 50 | 15.2 |
| | Excellent | | | 41 | 12.5 |
| Self-perceived mental health (MH) (<i>n</i> , %) | Poor or fair | | | 203 | 61.9 |
| | Good | | | 67 | 20.4 |
| | Very good | | | 33 | 10.1 |
| | Excellent | | | 25 | 7.6 |

| | | Minimum | Maximum | n/ Mean | %/SD |
|---|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|------|
| Self-perceived importance of MH presenting problem at the emergency department (ED) (n, %) | Very important | | | 233 | 71.0 |
| | Important | | | 66 | 20.1 |
| | Not at all important | | | 29 | 8.8 |
| MH problems justifying ED use | Suicidal ideation or attempt | | | 91 | 27.8 |
| | Depression | | | 38 | 11.6 |
| | Anxiety disorders | | | 35 | 10.7 |
| | Psychotic disorders | | | 15 | 4.6 |
| | Bipolar disorders | | | 9 | 2.7 |
| | Mental health instability | | | 13 | 4.0 |
| | Others | | | 8 | 2.4 |
| Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) score ^a : Individuals with a score of 8+ (n, %) | | | | 99 | 30.2 |
| Drug Abuse Screening Test-20 (DAST-20) score (Mean, SD) ^b : Individuals with a score of 6+ (Mean, SD) ^b | | | | 92 | 28.0 |
| In the last 12 months, have you borrowed money without paying it back because of gambling? | Yes | | | 12 | 3.7 |
| | No | | | 316 | 96.3 |
| Service use characteristics | | | | | |
| Knowledge of MH or addictions services (n, %) | Poor | | | 133 | 40.5 |
| | Good | | | 100 | 30.5 |
| | Very good | | | 52 | 15.9 |
| | Excellent | | | 43 | 13.1 |
| Use of services other than EDs in the past 12 months for mental disorders or substance use disorders (SUDs) (n, %) | Yes | | | 207 | 63.1 |
| | No | | | 121 | 36.9 |
| Have family physician (n, %) | Yes | | | 214 | 65.2 |
| | No | | | 114 | 34.8 |
| Have a psychiatrist (n, %) | Yes | | | 147 | 44.8 |
| | No | | | 181 | 55.2 |
| Have another care provider (n, %) | Yes | | | 133 | 40.5 |
| | No | | | 195 | 59.5 |
| Number of visits to EDs for mental disorders or SUD reasons in the past 12 months (Mean, SD) | | 1 | 31 | 2.39 | 3.82 |
| Frequent ED users among patients with mental disorders (n, %) | | | | 45 | 13.7 |

^a 10 items (0–4 for each variable); Min = 0; Max = 40; Higher = greater alcohol use; 8+ = hazardous or harmful alcohol use

^b 20 items (0–1 for each variable); Min = 0; Max = 20; Higher = greater drug use; 6+ = likelihood of substance abuse or dependence

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TABLE 2. Satisfaction with services ($n = 328$)

| | | <i>n</i> /Mean | %/SD |
|--|----------------------|----------------|------|
| Satisfaction with emergency department (ED) services | | | |
| Practitioners at the ED have a good opinion of me or treat me fairly despite my problems | Totally disagree | 16 | 4.9 |
| | Somewhat disagree | 12 | 3.7 |
| | Somewhat agree | 39 | 11.9 |
| | Agree | 135 | 41.2 |
| | Totally agree | 126 | 38.4 |
| ED practitioners are respectful | Totally disagree | 4 | 1.2 |
| | Somewhat disagree | 11 | 3.4 |
| | Somewhat agree | 28 | 8.5 |
| | Agree | 115 | 35.1 |
| | Totally agree | 170 | 51.8 |
| I have received adequate information at the ED about my problems and treatments | Totally disagree | 33 | 10.1 |
| | Somewhat disagree | 40 | 12.2 |
| | Somewhat agree | 62 | 18.9 |
| | Agree | 95 | 29.0 |
| | Totally agree | 98 | 29.9 |
| I have received adequate information at the ED about available community services that respond to my needs | Totally disagree | 83 | 25.3 |
| | Somewhat disagree | 49 | 14.9 |
| | Somewhat agree | 52 | 21.3 |
| | Agree | 70 | 22.6 |
| | Totally agree | 74 | 22.6 |
| My visits to the ED provide adequate treatment for my problems | Totally disagree | 40 | 12.2 |
| | Somewhat disagree | 30 | 9.1 |
| | Somewhat agree | 75 | 22.9 |
| | Agree | 101 | 30.8 |
| | Totally agree | 82 | 25.0 |
| Satisfaction with MH services outside the ED | | | |
| Practitioners outside the ED have a good opinion of me or treat me fairly despite my problems | Totally disagree | 13 | 6.1 |
| | Somewhat disagree | 20 | 3.7 |
| | Somewhat agree | 47 | 14.3 |
| | Agree | 107 | 32.6 |
| | Totally agree | 141 | 43.0 |
| Services outside the ED respond to my needs | Not at all satisfied | 30 | 9.1 |
| | A little unsatisfied | 29 | 8.8 |
| | Fairly satisfied | 65 | 19.8 |
| | Satisfied | 65 | 19.8 |
| | Totally satisfied | 108 | 32.9 |
| | Not applicable | 31 | 9.5 |

| | | n/ Mean | %/ SD |
|--|----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Satisfaction with care received from family physician (n = 213) | Not at all satisfied | 12 | 5.6 |
| | A little unsatisfied | 19 | 8.9 |
| | Fairly satisfied | 23 | 10.8 |
| | Satisfied | 61 | 28.6 |
| | Totally satisfied | 98 | 46.0 |
| Satisfaction with care received from psychiatrist (n = 147) | Not at all satisfied | 10 | 6.8 |
| | A little unsatisfied | 7 | 4.8 |
| | Fairly satisfied | 23 | 15.6 |
| | Satisfied | 35 | 23.8 |
| | Totally satisfied | 72 | 48.9 |
| Satisfaction with care received from other care providers (n = 133) | Not at all satisfied | 2 | 1.5 |
| | A little unsatisfied | 3 | 2.3 |
| | Fairly satisfied | 17 | 12.8 |
| | Satisfied | 37 | 27.8 |
| | Totally satisfied | 74 | 55.6 |

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TABLE 3. Positive and negative comments of individuals regarding EDs versus other MH services ($n = 328$)

| | EDs | | | | | Other MH services [*] | | | | |
|---|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|------|-------------|------|-------------------------|
| | + | % | - | % | Difference ^a | + | % | - | % | Difference ^a |
| Total assessment ($n = 328$) | 286 | 87.2 | 173 | 52.5 | +113 | 226 | 68.9 | 183 | 55.8 | +43 |
| 1. Staff attitudes/behaviours | $(n = 286)$ | | $(n = 173)$ | | | $(n = 226)$ | | $(n = 183)$ | | |
| Respect/calm | 191 | 66.7 | 45 | 26.0 | +146 | 88 | 38.9 | 16 | 8.7 | +72 |
| Listening skills/empathy | 113 | 39.5 | 57 | 32.9 | +56 | 77 | 34.1 | 20 | 10.9 | +57 |
| 2. Physical environment/climate | $(n = 286)$ | | $(n = 173)$ | | | $(n = 226)$ | | $(n = 183)$ | | |
| Calm/comfort/cleanliness/safety | 26 | 9.1 | 69 | 39.9 | -43 | 10 | 4.4 | 15 | 8.2 | -5 |
| Rules and regulations | 0 | 0.0 | 30 | 17.3 | -30 | 9 | 3.9 | 20 | 10.9 | -11 |
| 3. Wait times/accessibility of services | $(n = 286)$ | | $(n = 173)$ | | | $(n = 226)$ | | $(n = 183)$ | | |
| | 79 | 27.6 | 57 | 32.9 | +22 | 8 | 3.5 | 61 | 33.3 | -53 |
| 4. Quality of services offered | $(n = 286)$ | | $(n = 173)$ | | | $(n = 226)$ | | $(n = 183)$ | | |
| Total | 119 | 41.6 | 52 | 30.0 | +67 | 120 | 53.1 | 124 | 67.8 | -4 |
| | $(n = 119)$ | | $(n = 52)$ | | | $(n = 120)$ | | $(n = 124)$ | | |
| Follow-up | 35 | 29.4 | 7 | 13.5 | +28 | 53 | 44.2 | 41 | 33.1 | +12 |
| Staff availability | 29 | 24.4 | 20 | 38.5 | +9 | 46 | 38.3 | 28 | 22.6 | +18 |
| Clarity of information re: care processes and referrals | 13 | 10.9 | 27 | 51.9 | -14 | 2 | 1.7 | 14 | 11.3 | -12 |
| Staff MH knowledge | 34 | 28.6 | 6 | 11.5 | +28 | 19 | 15.8 | 41 | 33.1 | -22 |
| Activities/meals/socialization provided | 7 | 5.9 | 11 | 21.1 | -4 | 36 | 30.0 | 15 | 12.1 | +21 |
| Capacity of services to meet needs | 10 | 8.4 | 4 | 7.6 | +6 | 9 | 7.5 | 24 | 19.4 | -15 |

^{*} In-patient units, outpatient clinics, day hospitals, local community service centres, walk-in clinics, rehabilitation centres, crisis centres, other community organizations, family physicians, private psychologists.

+ %: Proportion of participants with positive comments.

- %: Proportion of participants with negative comments.

^a Number of participants with positive comments – number of participants with negative comments.

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TABLE 4. Quote citations

| | EDs | Other MH services |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Staff attitudes/behaviours | | |
| Respect/calm (+) | <i>"They have gotten to know me and know what works and what doesn't work, so when they talk to me calmly and not get frazzled and not get aggressive. I appreciate that kind of intervention."</i> (AF_114038_1) | <i>"The quality of the staff. They are courteous and kind. This is the most positive thing I see."</i> (FG_341007) |
| Listening skills/empathy (+) | <i>"There didn't seem to be any discriminatory eye, no discriminatory eye with no hostility."</i> (JB_114021_1) | <i>"Human warmth, especially comfort and listening to the patient ... the capacity to be truly kind. These people didn't choose psychiatry for nothing; they are very open-minded."</i> (GM_124019_1) |
| Listening skills/empathy (-) | <i>"They don't talk to you really ... I was crying, and they didn't come over and console me ..."</i> (DO_114033_1) | <i>"Whether they listen, I don't know; they don't understand very much."</i> (HR_2324022_1) |
| 2. Physical environment/climate | | |
| Calm/comfort/cleanliness/safety (+) | <i>"The environment here more satisfactory because it's calmer. Also, there are fewer people."</i> (MJL_121007_1) | <i>"The feeling of security; I love the feeling that nothing can happen here and that, if something happens, there are people who will listen and help me."</i> (CL_344001) |
| Calm/comfort/cleanliness/safety (-) | <i>"There's a lot of noise. I understand that this is the emergency department (ED), but there should be less noise when it's a psychiatric ED – I had difficulty tolerating people ... they slam the doors and talk loudly. It's more difficult because we are near the (nursing) station and even at night it's noisy. It's harder to endure when you are sick."</i> (SA_364005) | <i>"Some will scream, some will have violent attitudes; they move quickly, sing and dance at the wrong moments, which stresses me. I don't have to put up with all this emotion; I am a patient, and I have a right to be calm, I have a right to respect. I don't know why they keep these people on the unit. It bothers me."</i> (AM_124012_1) |
| Rules and regulations (+) | N.A. – no positive comment | <i>"I'm happy with the efforts they made letting you have some freedom, for instance, going outside every hour. They have individual phone booths so that you can make private calls, which is nice. They let you do your own laundry, which is also nice. You have your own furniture and bed, which is also nice. And you – you're allowed to keep your phone and charge it periodically when needed, which is also very much appreciated."</i> (JD_114054_1) |
| Rules and regulations (restrictive measures) (-) | <i>"The hardest thing, I think, is since they took out all the smoking lounges because the smokers became really aggressive; but that has had repercussions on the staff as well as on the other clients who are not necessarily smokers, and who are quiet."</i> (LP_113008_1) | <i>"In psychiatry, it isn't like an all-included trip down south ... you're under surveillance, cameras everywhere; you sleep with the door open and you sleep badly because you know that someone is going to enter the room. You don't know; you are stressed."</i> (JC_113022_1) |

| | EDs | Other MH services |
|---|--|--|
| 3- Wait times/accessibility of services (+) | "I was taken into treatment quickly, and saw a psychiatrist quickly as well." (LG_340212_12) | "It was quick. I don't remember exactly, but within a week or so, my admission was done. The interview, everything was done. So it was done quickly." (NA_121011_1) |
| 3- Wait times/accessibility of services (-) | "My impression is that we arrive at the ED and are left waiting. It's very long, I find, when they put you in an ED and say: 'put on your gown.' You are left waiting a half hour, or 45 minutes sometimes, on a stretcher or little bed ... I know I'm at the ED, but I deplore that just the same." (JF_234019_1) | "They told me at the CLSC (local community service centre) that someone would call me two to five days later, but I didn't get a call for three weeks. I tried to call back, I left messages, nothing." (BD_11033_1) |
| 3. Quality of services offered | | |
| Follow-up (+) | "What I most appreciated was that there was a lot of supervision ... If we forgot to take our medications, they would remind us ... I'm not there to judge, but I found myself well taken care of by them." (AM_124012_1) | "In fact, for me it was the CLSC. What I appreciated was the follow-up that emerged here with a mental health (MH) nurse. She got my news, and called from time to time, saying that she hadn't heard from me. They didn't just drop me." (DB_341001_1) |
| Follow-up (-) | "Several times I presented myself at the ED, and was discharged within 24–48 hours... I had the impression that they were divesting themselves of responsibility, that they gave the responsibility to my family to attend to my security, make sure that I kept my appointment, and all that. My family had to take charge of things ..." (NA_121011_1) | "I never see a psychiatrist for follow-up, whether leaving here or elsewhere. Never, never, never ... You think I'm making this story up? No, the mental health system in Quebec is horrible." (BL_114016_1) |
| Staff availability (+) | "The doctors, the psychiatrists, they are so available ... I think that the services of psychiatrists are what I most appreciated." (MA_121010_1) | "Outside of the ED, the calm on the ward, the availability of the staff and the amiability of certain staff people..." (NG_124024_10) |
| Staff availability (-) | "I don't think they are really able to help me by keeping me here because they haven't offered me any service; what I mean is that they are not really available; they aren't around to talk with you. At least this is what I have seen up until now." (MC_113004_1) | "It's just that I have no idea what resources are available to help me manage my mental health." (MI_124011_1) |
| Clarity of information regarding care processes and referrals (+) | "A certain amount of follow-up around available information and resources ..." (RP_361018) | "In the middle of a crisis, we are so well received. They take the time to explain things to us and to take notes. You are seen right away as soon as you get to the department. In short, it's very, very good." (CH_351008) |
| Clarity of information regarding care processes and referrals (-) | "This isn't normal. The doctor just says: 'Okay, I'm going to give you some love' – I'm just saying anything here, I don't know what it is. But if the person isn't there, mentally, she doesn't have the information. How much time would it take to just print a paper, to give the person an information sheet on the medication, about the purpose it serves, why you take that. Make patients responsible, and at the same time give them some explanations. I think this is important." (SJD_114002_2) | "The changes in my medication, and treatment, how much time they are thinking of keeping me, where I'll go, the strategies they are putting in place to help me: these are all things that I would like to know." (CB_234012_1) |
| Staff mental health knowledge (+) | "It's the experience and professionalism of the workers ... I add 'experience' because there are few subjects you can bring up that they aren't already familiar with ... The Douglas Hospital has quality staff, very professional." (GL_11038_1) | "Competence and lots of services that are very nice to receive. Very good hospital ..." (DR_124023_1) |
| Staff mental health knowledge (-) | "For more than a year I met with a psychiatrist here, which was probably the worst experience I had for mental health problems. I felt worse afterward. It didn't really address the problem I had." (PTL_111012_1) | "The first time I returned to see my family doctor after I was hospitalized, I got my diagnosis, and follow-up with the psychiatrist. She saw in my file for the first time that I was bipolar. She looked at me and said: 'Oh no. Wasn't it just like in the movies?' That frightens me to see that doctors are worse than the general population when it comes to their knowledge, and the prejudices they have, around being bipolar. It was like pulling the rug out from under me." (NT_361004) |

| | EDs | Other MH services |
|---|---|--|
| Activities/meals/socialization provided (+) | <i>"It's number one. They gave me a bed immediately, as I had been up all night. I got a bed and slept all night. The next day they gave me a meal before sending me up to the fourth floor; I hadn't eaten the previous day."</i> (MB_234029_1) | <i>"What I liked was that they didn't just drug us; we also developed talents; horticulture in my case. I played with the soil; I planted things, and this developed into my passion."</i> (BL_114016_1) |
| Activities/meals/socialization provided (-) | <i>"I find that those of us in mental health, or psychiatry, are left to ourselves a lot. I understand that they are busy, but I wonder if they could do some reading to better understand or watch some videos ... or other means that would give them some information about how to treat mental illness." (ML_341007) "I'm not asking for privileges. It's just that I have no other place to go because your cafeteria closes at 2 p.m., so offer me an alternative."</i> (LJ_112003_1) | <i>"There's nothing to do while you're here besides watch TV and I can't watch TV because I really have a poor concentration."</i> (SB_114030_1) |
| Capacity of services to meet needs (+) | <i>"In terms of treatment, it was really in the ED that they took care of my urgent needs; like when it was a crisis, they understood the problem and directed me to the services I needed."</i> (SL_114035_1) | <i>"Other than the ED? Their impartiality really helped, and I felt accompanied. These were real services; I looked for the best out there; I realized over time that the psychologist was a treasure, just what I needed ... This allowed me to go further, and very fast. I'm feeling well."</i> (JR_111053_1) |
| Capacity of services to meet needs (-) | <i>"I realize that it's always the same medications; always the same thing. There is nothing concrete. It isn't like you have a headache, where you go to the hospital and they give you medications. Here, they give you false hope; they aren't honest with patients."</i> (DK_222060_1) | <i>"I needed a consultation. It was the year that was most difficult for me, perhaps more difficult than other years ... If I had been able to have more sessions with the psychologist, I may not have decompensated to the extent that I did."</i> (CB_112004_1) |