

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Satisfaction and preferences of the patient visitors toward visiting hour policy in postnatal ward of a selected hospital, Mangalore: A descriptive study

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## ABSTRACT

**Context:** Hospital establishes daily visiting hours and rules for the comfort and safety of patients and their loved ones. The need to minimize disruption to the therapeutic environment of the patients while giving patients' and their families' time to be together, is an integral part of patient-centeredness and patient's recovery. **Aims:** The aim of the study is to determine the level of satisfaction of the patient visitors toward the visiting hour policy, to identify their preferences, and to associate satisfaction toward visiting hour policy with selected demographic variables. **Settings and Design:** Postnatal ward of selected Medical College Hospital, Mangaluru and a cross-sectional descriptive study design. **Materials and Methods:** Five-point rating scale to assess the level of satisfaction and a semi-structured questionnaire to identify the preferences of the patient visitors toward visiting hour policy. **Statistical Analysis Used:** Frequency, mean, standard deviation, mean percentage, and Chi-Square for the association. **Results:** Majority (74%) were satisfied toward visiting hour policy, and a few (3%) were not satisfied. More than half (59%) visitors prefer the visiting hour policy to be displayed in Kannada language, majority (78%) prefer to have 2-h duration of visiting, and more than half (68%) prefer one visitor at a time. Association was found between satisfaction and experience on previous visits ( $P = 0.011 < 0.05$  level) of the visitors. **Conclusions:** Pooled results showed that patient visitors were satisfied with visiting hour policy and also had similar preferences for visiting hour policy.

**Key Words:** Preferences, satisfaction, visiting hour policy

## Introduction

Within the challenging health-care environment, advances in science and technology have made nursing practice in acute care settings highly complex, rapid, and demanding. We know that family wants proximity to information about their loved ones, but the benefits of having a patient's family members present during the patient's hospitalization can depend on the patient's condition and the family patient dynamics.<sup>[1]</sup> Visitors are important for the patient's well-being, and they assist in their recovery. Visitor policy provides guidance, reduces disease transmission by avoiding crowded situations, provides restful nondisruptive nursing care, promotes family-/patient-centered care, and controls appropriate access to hospitals. Patients and the visitors have the responsibility to follow hospital policy and are expected

to show respect and consideration to the hospital's staff as well as other patients and their property.<sup>[2]</sup> The postnatal mothers in the hospital are benefited with the presence of family members and friends which is essential to promote the feeling of sense of security, to divert pain perception, and to enhance speedy

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**Table 1: The mean, standard deviation, and mean percentage of satisfaction toward hospital visiting hour policy**

Variable	Items	Maximum score	Mean±SD	Mean (%)	Level of satisfaction
Satisfaction on hospital visiting hour policy	10	50	35.04±6.24	70	Satisfied

SD=Standard deviation

**Table 2: The preference of patient visitors toward the visiting hour policy**

Preference of visiting hour policy	Percentage
Mode of information regarding visiting hours	
Verbal information	64
Printed on the registration card	31
No preference	5
Area for display of visiting hours	
Hospital entrance	54
Corridor of maternity unit	20
Outpatient department	21
Any other	5
Preferred language displayed for visiting hour	
Kannada	59
Malayalam	19
English	2
All the above	20
Preferable visiting timings	
8 am–10 am	35
2 pm–4 pm	43
6 pm–8 pm	15
Any other	7
Preferred visiting hours to be during meal time	
Yes	27
No	73
Preferable duration of visiting hour	
1 h	16
2 h	78
No preference	6
Preference on number of visitors at the time of visit	
One	32
More than one	68
Willingness to bring children for patient visit in the hospital	
Yes	14
No	86
Preferred etiquette of the patient visitors to be followed during the visiting hour	
Talking softly	8
Switching off mobile	5
Maintaining others patients privacy	11
All of above	76

### Objectives of the study

1. To determine the level of satisfaction n of the patient visitors toward the visiting hour policy
2. To identify preferences of the patient visitors toward the visiting hour policy
3. To associate the level of satisfaction of patient visitors toward visiting hour policy with the demographic variables.

### Materials and Methods

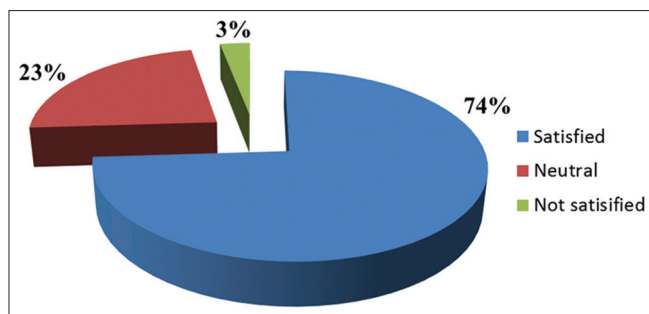
A cross-sectional descriptive study design was employed to study the satisfaction and preferences of the 100 patient visitors toward visiting hour Policy in the postnatal ward. The purposive sampling technique was used. The selection criteria included visitors above the age of 18 years, attending postnatal ward, able to communicate in English, Kannada, and Malayalam. The immediate family member, caregiver, and visitors with physical and mental disabilities were excluded from the study. The study was performed in the postnatal ward of a selected hospital Mangaluru. The self-developed tool for data collection consisted of baseline pro forma, five-point rating scale to assess the level of satisfaction, and a semi-structured questionnaire to identify preferences of the patient visitors toward visiting hour policy. The split-half method was used to find the reliability of satisfaction rating scale with  $r = 0.97$ . The questions on preferences were semi-structured survey form, hence no reliability was established. The tool was later pretested. Permission was obtained from the selected hospital to conduct the study. Informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality of information was assured. The data collection for each visitor lasted for 15 min.

### Results

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.

recovery. Simultaneously, family members, friends, and well-wishers will have high degree of excitement to see newborn as well as the mother. The unscheduled visiting policy has drawbacks such as transmission of infections to newborn, transmission of infection to immune compromised visitors and children, disruption of quality care, lack of privacy to the mothers, and noisy environment which disturbs other patients.

The pie diagram in Figure 1 shows that majority of the participants were satisfied toward the visiting hour policy (74%) and a very few (3%) were not satisfied. A majority of the participants were satisfied toward the visiting hour policy (74%) and a very few (3%) were not satisfied. The Table 1 depicts the mean of 35.04 and standard deviation of 6.24 towards the satisfactions on the visiting hour policy.



**Figure 1:** Satisfaction of patient visitors toward visiting hour policy

Regarding the preferences, less than half (43%) of the participants preferred visiting timing between 2 pm and 4 pm. More than half (59%) of the participants preferred the display of visiting hour policy in the Kannada language. Three-fourth (78%) participants preferred 2 h of duration for visiting, and more than half (68%) preferred one visitor at a time to visit the women in the postnatal ward. Table 2 depicts the preference of patient visitors towards the visiting hour policy.

The findings of the study also showed that there was significant association. There was no other association found between satisfaction toward visiting hour policy and the demographic variable.

### Sample characteristics

Out of 100 visitors surveyed, less than half (43%) were in the age group of 18–30 years and majority (75%) were female. Half of the participants (51%) were Muslim and had completed only high school education. Majority (85%) were married and less than half (44%) lived in a joint family. Majority of the visitors (47%) were related as siblings to the postnatal mother admitted in postnatal ward. Majority (65%) had previous visit to the hospital, especially to the postnatal ward. Many visitors (48%) rated their experience regarding hospital visiting hour policy as good.

### Discussion

The overall mean satisfaction level showed that majority of the visitors were satisfied toward the visiting hour policy. The study results showed that majority of the visitors attending the postnatal ward were females and Muslims. A similar study was also conducted to assess the perception and preferences of the patients, family/friends, and nurses on visiting time in intensive care units (ICUs). Findings reveal that 78.9% were satisfied, but 21.05% were dissatisfied.<sup>[3]</sup>

However, in the present findings, association was found between level of satisfaction with experience

on previous visits is accepted ( $P = 0.011 < 0.05$ ). Similar studies results show that flexible visiting hours were not associated with an increased risk in hospital-acquired infections or septic complications in ICUs, where the majority of the reviewed studies were carried out.<sup>[4]</sup>

In the present findings, less than half preferred visiting timing between 2 pm and 4 pm. More than half of the participants preferred the display of visiting hour policy in the Kannada language. Three-fourth participants preferred duration of 2 h for visiting, and more than half preferred one visitor at a time to visit the women in the postnatal ward. Some of the findings contrast the information available in the existing studies. Patients and visitors preferred open visiting with a quiet hour; nursing staff preferred set visiting hours; one-third of patients were embarrassed about receiving nursing care in front of visitors; one-third of patients, visitors, and staff did not like visitors to be present at mealtimes.<sup>[5]</sup>

The present study throws light on the satisfaction and preferences of hospital visitors visiting the postnatal ward at the selected Medical College Hospital. The satisfaction variable in this study provides a feedback regarding the hospital visiting policy that will enable the health-care authorities to ensure a good quality service to the women admitted in the postnatal ward. Knowing the preferences will help the hospital authorities to consider the suggestions that can improve and maintain the quality services so as to meet the standards of any accreditation association. The present study provides a positive feedback with adequate level of satisfaction to the visiting hour policy, and it states that their preferences match the current visiting hour policy of the hospital.

Previous experiences of hospital visits, especially to the postnatal ward, might influence the results. The visitors might get familiarize with the visiting policies during their frequent visits. Further studies with a better methodology are required to draw definite conclusions. This study could be replicated on a larger sample for generalizing the findings. Replication of the same study can be done could be done on the other population segments such as patient or nurses.

### Conclusions

Nurses, patients, and visitors did not prefer open visiting as the first choice, preferring to have a rest period. Satisfaction of patients and patient visitors is a powerful quality improvement measurement to provide quality care in any health-care facility.

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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