

PATIENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS AFFORDABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND TRANSPARENCY OF SERVICES IN SELECTED EYE CARE HOSPITALS OF TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

Patient perception has become a vital indicator of service quality and performance in healthcare institutions. In eye care hospitals, affordability, accessibility, and transparency play a crucial role in shaping patient satisfaction and trust. Tamil Nadu is a leading hub for ophthalmic services, attracting patients from across the country; however, variations in service experiences across hospitals necessitate systematic evaluation. The present study examines patients' perceptions towards affordability, accessibility, and transparency of services in selected eye care hospitals of Tamil Nadu. The study was conducted in Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai, covering four major eye care hospitals, namely Aravind Eye Hospital, Dr. Agarwal's Eye Hospital, Vasan Eye Care Hospital, and The Eye Foundation. Primary data were collected from 600 patients using a structured questionnaire, and secondary data were sourced from journals, reports, and hospital publications. Stratified random sampling was adopted, and statistical tools such as descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests were applied using SPSS. The findings reveal that a majority of patients reported a moderate level of perception regarding affordability, accessibility, and transparency, followed by high perception levels. Socio-economic variables such as age, gender, educational qualification, income, and frequency of hospital visits were found to have no significant association with patients' perception levels. The study highlights the need for continuous improvement in transparent communication, cost clarity, and service accessibility to enhance patient satisfaction. The study provides practical insights for hospital administrators to strengthen patient-centered service delivery in eye care hospitals.

Key Words: Accessibility, Affordability, Patient perception and Transparency

Introduction

The healthcare sector has undergone significant transformation in recent years, with increasing emphasis on patient-centered care and service quality. Patient perception is now widely recognized as a key measure of hospital performance, influencing satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. In specialized healthcare services such as ophthalmology, patients not only expect clinical excellence but also demand affordability, accessibility, and transparency in service delivery. These dimensions are particularly important in eye care hospitals, where services range from routine check-ups to advanced surgical procedures requiring long-term follow-up. Tamil Nadu has emerged as one of India's most prominent centers for eye care services, supported by well-established hospitals, skilled medical professionals, and advanced technology. Cities such as Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai attract a large number of patients due to the availability of reputed eye hospitals and cost-effective treatment options. Despite this growth, patients' experiences often vary across hospitals in terms of treatment costs, ease of access, waiting time, staff communication, and clarity in billing and medical procedures. Such variations directly influence patients' perceptions and overall satisfaction.

Affordability refers to the financial feasibility of healthcare services for patients without causing economic strain. Accessibility involves the availability and convenience of services, including location, appointment systems, and waiting time. Transparency relates to clear communication regarding treatment procedures, pricing, billing, and post-treatment care. Together, these factors determine the quality of patient experience and trust in healthcare institutions. Although several studies have examined patient satisfaction in general healthcare settings, limited empirical research focuses specifically on affordability, accessibility, and transparency in eye care hospitals in Tamil Nadu. Understanding patients' perceptions in these areas is essential for identifying service gaps and implementing effective quality improvement strategies. Therefore, the present study attempts to analyze patients' perceptions towards these key service dimensions in selected eye care hospitals. The findings aim to assist hospital administrators and policymakers in enhancing service quality, strengthening patient trust, and promoting sustainable healthcare delivery.

Concept of Patient Perception

Patient perception refers to the way patients evaluate healthcare services based on their experiences, expectations, and interactions with hospital staff and systems. It reflects patients' subjective judgments regarding service quality, efficiency, and fairness.

Affordability of Healthcare Services

Affordability involves the ability of patients to access healthcare services without financial hardship. In eye care hospitals, transparent pricing, reasonable treatment costs, and flexible payment options significantly influence patient satisfaction and treatment adherence.

Accessibility of Eye Care Services

Accessibility refers to the ease with which patients can obtain healthcare services when required. Factors such as hospital location, appointment availability, waiting time, and supportive staff play a vital role in improving accessibility.

Transparency in Healthcare Delivery

Transparency ensures openness and clarity in hospital operations, including treatment procedures, billing systems, and communication. Transparent practices enhance patient trust, reduce anxiety, and promote informed decision-making.

Review of Literature

Balu, T. & Anitha, R. (2022) examined the relationship between staff behaviour and patient satisfaction in large tertiary eye hospitals in Chennai. The study surveyed 500 patients and found that interpersonal behaviour greetings, politeness, willingness to explain, and patience - was a more influential determinant of satisfaction than the time spent with the doctor. Nursing staff played a major role in shaping perceptions of service quality. Male patients tended to emphasise efficiency, while female patients emphasised empathy and reassurance. Complaints included rude front-desk interactions, inadequate guidance for elderly patients, and lack of assistance in filling forms. Hospitals that implemented staff soft-skills training and assigned volunteers to help elderly patients showed significant improvements in satisfaction scores.

Gowda and Ramesh (2019) conducted an analytical study on patient satisfaction in ophthalmology units of government medical colleges in Karnataka. A sample of 310 patients was surveyed to understand the role of demographic variables, accessibility, and affordability in shaping satisfaction. The findings indicated that older patients placed higher importance on staff empathy and clarity of instructions, while younger patients valued speed of service and online appointment facilities. Accessibility challenges were more prominent among rural respondents, who reported long travel distances and inadequate public transportation.

Although treatment was free or low-cost, dissatisfaction existed regarding transparency in waiting time announcements and delays in diagnostic tests. Many patients raised concerns about overcrowding, insufficient seating, and lack of guidance volunteers, which negatively affected their overall perception. The study emphasised strengthening patient-flow systems, improving communication through display boards, and ensuring equal treatment for all demographic groups.

Johnson, L. (2023) evaluated patient perceptions of service quality and satisfaction in eye clinics in the United States, focusing on key functional aspects such as waiting time, surgeon expertise, staff courtesy, and technological advancement. The results from 386 respondents showed that advanced diagnostic equipment significantly improved perceived service reliability. Patients emphasized the importance of clear pre-operative guidelines and detailed post-operative instructions. The study also found that dissatisfaction commonly stemmed from long waiting times and inconsistent communication regarding appointment rescheduling. Demographic analysis showed older patients rated clinical competency higher, while younger patients emphasised speed and digital-based support systems.

Statement of the Problem

Patient perception has emerged as a crucial indicator of service quality and overall performance in healthcare institutions. In the field of ophthalmology, eye care hospitals are expected to deliver not only advanced medical treatment but also affordable, accessible, and transparent services to meet growing patient expectations. Tamil Nadu, being a prominent center for eye care services and medical tourism, hosts several reputed eye care hospitals. However, variations in patient experiences across hospitals and cities such as Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai suggest inconsistencies in service delivery. Factors such as pricing clarity, ease of access, waiting time, staff communication, and post-treatment guidance significantly influence patient satisfaction. Despite the importance of these dimensions, empirical studies focusing specifically on patient perception of affordability, accessibility, and transparency in selected eye care hospitals of Tamil Nadu remain limited. This gap restricts healthcare administrators from identifying service deficiencies and implementing patient-centered improvements. Therefore, the present study seeks to analyze patients' perceptions of these key service dimensions to enhance quality, trust, and satisfaction in eye care hospitals.

Objectives of the Study

- ☉ To analyze patient perceptions regarding affordability, accessibility, and transparency of services.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between age group and patients' perceptions regarding affordability, accessibility, and transparency of patient satisfaction towards hospital services.
2. Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between age group and patients' perceptions regarding affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services.

Scope of the Study

The study examines patients' perceptions towards affordability, accessibility, and transparency of services in selected eye care hospitals of Tamil Nadu. It is confined to four leading ophthalmology hospitals located in Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai. The study covers patients who have availed outpatient, diagnostic, surgical, and follow-up services during the period of data collection. The analysis is based on patients' perceptions and satisfaction levels related to service delivery and does not assess clinical outcomes or medical effectiveness. The findings are geographically limited to the selected cities and may not be generalized to rural areas or other regions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling Methodology

The present study was conducted across three major cities of Tamil Nadu, namely Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai, to assess patient satisfaction towards selected eye care hospitals. The hospitals included in the study were Aravind Eye Hospital, Dr. Agarwal's Eye Hospital, Vasan Eye Care Hospital and The Eye Foundation, , which are well-established and widely recognized in the field of ophthalmology.

Population and Sample Size

The study targeted population was the patients that received treatment in the chosen eye care hospitals within the three cities. The study involved 600 respondents, including 50 respondents of each hospital, to ensure that there was good representation. The distribution was structured such that it was comparable across the districts as well as giving a data set that was large enough to analyze.

Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was used in the research. The cities were regarded as distinct strata, with the same representation in the three places. In every stratum a random selection procedure was adopted to select the patients in the selected hospitals. This method reduced sampling limitations and made the respondents a sample of a cross-section of the patients in terms of age, sex and treatment type received.

Data Collection Method

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources to ensure comprehensive and reliable findings.

☉ Primary Data

Direct observation of the patients in the chosen eye care hospitals at Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai was used to gather primary data. The structured questionnaire was developed to bring details of different areas of patient satisfaction such as the quality of the service, the way the staff behaved, effectiveness of the treatment, hospital facilities, waiting time, and experience. The respondents reached the hospital premises once they had availed their services, their consent was sought and then the survey was administered. A total of 600 responses ($50 \times 4 \text{ hospitals} = 200 \times 3 \text{ City} = 600$) were collected using random sampling technique as explained in the sampling design.

☉ Secondary Data

Secondary data were gathered from reliable published sources to provide contextual background and support the analysis. These included: Research articles and academic journals as to patient satisfaction and the quality of healthcare. The selected eye care

institutions are hospitals, brochures, and official websites. Government reports, industry reports, databases in the area of healthcare services in Tamil Nadu.

Study Area

The research was conducted across three major cities of Tamil Nadu: Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai, which are well-known hubs for healthcare and eye care services.

Tools Used for the Study

The following statistical tools are applied with the help of statistical software SPSS version 27.0.

☉ Descriptive statistics

☉ Chi Square Test

Patients' of Perceptions towards Affordability, Accessibility and Transparency of Services

Patient perception is a vital indicator when it comes to assessing quality and efficacy of services in hospitals. Affordability, accessibility, and transparency are some of the factors that have significant effects on the overall health care experience that patients have. Financial sustainability of the services to patients depends on affordability, accessibility on the availability and convenience of care where and when it is needed, and transparency on trust and accountability through transparent communication. Collectively, the dimensions influence patient satisfaction and inform their future health care decisions. Getting insights into patient perceptions in these areas is therefore paramount in enabling hospitals to understand areas of strengths, gaps, and develop patient-focused model of service delivery.

TABLE 1: LEVEL OF PERCEPTION

Level	N	Percent
Low	108	18.0
Moderate	284	47.3
High	208	34.7
Total	600	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The data on patients' level of perceptions regarding the affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services indicates that a majority fall into the moderate

perception category. Out of 600 respondents, 47.3% (284 patients) expressed a moderate level of perception, suggesting a balanced view-neither highly satisfied nor highly dissatisfied. Meanwhile, 34.7% (208 patients) reported a high level of perception, reflecting strong satisfaction with hospital affordability, accessibility, and transparency. However, a notable 18.0% (108 patients) indicated a low level of perception, highlighting dissatisfaction and possible gaps in service delivery.

Overall, the findings reveal that while most patients view hospital services positively, there remains a considerable proportion who perceives limitations. This underscores the need for health care institutions to enhance affordability, improve accessibility, and ensure transparency to raise overall patient satisfaction. The following hypothesis is framed to test the relationship between the socio-economic characteristics and the level of Perception method used by the respondents. The hypothesis is tested with the help of Chi-Square test and Contingency Coefficient (CC).

Age

The Chi-Square test of independence is a non-parametric statistical tool used to examine the relationship between two categorical variables. In this study, it is applied to analyze whether patients' age groups (less than 35 years, 35-45 years, and more than 45 years) have a significant association with their level of perceptions regarding affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services.

H_0 : There is no significant association between age group and patients' perceptions regarding affordability, accessibility, and transparency of patient satisfaction towards hospital services.

TABLE 2: AGE AND LEVEL OF PERCEPTION

Age group	Level of Perception			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Less than 35 years	22	119	85	226
	9.7%	52.7%	37.6%	100.0%
35 to 45 years	25	81	59	165
	15.2%	49.1%	35.8%	100.0%
More than 45 years	61	84	64	209
	29.2%	40.2%	30.6%	100.0%
Total	108	284	208	600
	18.0%	47.3%	34.7%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data

The data analysis shows that patients perceptions about affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services differ in relation to various age groups but the differences are not significant. The perception of the patients in the younger age group (below 35 years old) was rated as moderate to high with very little patients in the low perception category indicating a better attitude towards the services offered by the hospital among the younger age group. The same case was evident in the 35 to 45 years group, with most having moderate perceptions with the percentage related to low perceptions being slightly greater than that of the young group indicating a slight decrease in satisfaction. In contrast, patients older than 45 exhibited a comparatively higher level of low perceptions and a low percentage of high perceptions, which indicates that older people are more critical of the services in hospitals. Even with these visible trends, the chi-square test showed that the relationship between age group and level of perception was not significant meaning that the variation in perception levels cannot be explained only by age. This indicates that age may not be as much of a determinant in the satisfaction of patients with the services offered at the hospitals.

CHI-SQUARE TEST

Test	Chi-Square	Difference	Contingency Coefficient	Sig.
Result	5.214	4	0.101	0.278

The result of the Chi-Square test shows that the calculated value (5.214) for the given degree of freedom (4) is less than the expected value. The result of the contingency coefficient (0.101) is also very low and far from the value 1. Hence, the probability at the 27.8% level of significance indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of perception according to the age of the patients.

Gender

The Chi-Square test of independence is applied to examine whether there is any association between patients' gender and their level of perceptions regarding the affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services.

H₀: There is no significant association between gender and their level of perceptions regarding the affordability, accessibility, and transparency of patients' perception towards hospital services

TABLE 3: GENDER AND LEVEL OF PERCEPTION

Gender	Level of Perception			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Male	89	79	74	242
	36.8%	32.6%	30.6%	100.0%
Female	19	205	134	358
	5.3%	57.3%	37.4%	100.0%
Total	108	284	208	600
	18.0%	47.3%	34.7%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data

The data analysis shows that there is a distinct difference in the perception of the patients of the hospital services, according to gender. Among men respondents, over one-third (36.8) claimed a situation of low-perception, whereas only 30.6% expressed a high-perception state, and the reflection of the affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services are relatively unfavorable. Conversely, most of the female respondents (57.3) had the moderate perception and a good number (37.4) had the high perception and only a small number of 5.3 had the low perception. This indicates that the female patients usually have a more optimistic attitude towards hospital services than male patients who are more critical. In spite of these descriptive differences, the outcomes of the statistical tests find out the importance of their significance. Assuming that the chi-square test is significant, it would imply that gender does not have an insignificant impact on the level of perception; otherwise, it would imply that even though there are observable differences, gender does not have a significant effect on the satisfaction of patients with the services provided in the hospital.

CHI-SQUARE TEST

Test	Chi-Square	Difference	Contingency Coefficient	Sig.
Result	0.862	2	0.039	0.783

The Chi-Square test was conducted to examine the association between gender and patients' perceptions regarding the affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services. The results ($\chi^2 = 0.862$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.783$) indicate that the association is not statistically significant, meaning that gender does not influence patients' perceptions of these service parameters. The Contingency Coefficient value (0.039) further suggests that any relationship between gender and perception is negligible. These findings imply that

perceptions of hospital services are largely independent of gender, and healthcare providers may focus on broader strategies, such as improving overall service quality and communication, rather than targeting interventions based on gender differences.

Educational Qualification

The Chi-Square test of independence is applied to assess whether patients' educational qualification has any association with their perceptions of affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services.

H_0 : There is no significant association between Educational qualification and their level of perceptions regarding the affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services.

TABLE 4: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND LEVEL OF PERCEPTION

Educational qualification	Level of Perception			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
School level	14	53	32	99
	14.1%	53.5%	32.3%	100.0%
UG	32	168	87	287
	11.1%	58.5%	30.3%	100.0%
PG	42	62	88	192
	21.9%	32.3%	45.8%	100.0%
Professionals Others	10	1	1	12
	83.3%	8.3%	8.3%	100.0%
Others	10	0	0	10
	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	108	284	208	600
	18.0%	47.3%	34.7%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data

The analysis of patients' perceptions across different educational qualifications shows noticeable variations in how hospital services are evaluated. Respondents with school-level education largely reported moderate perceptions (53.5%), with a fair proportion also expressing high perceptions (32.3%), while only 14.1% indicated low perceptions. Among undergraduates, the majority (58.5%) expressed moderate perceptions, while 30.3% reported high perceptions and just 11.1% reflected low perceptions, suggesting a relatively balanced and moderately positive outlook. Postgraduates, however, displayed a different trend, with a

higher share (45.8%) in the high perception category, followed by 32.3% moderate and 21.9% low, indicating that higher educational attainment is associated with more favorable views of hospital services. In contrast, professional respondents showed a strikingly different pattern, with 83.3% expressing low perceptions and only a small fraction reporting moderate or high perceptions, suggesting a highly critical stance. Similarly, respondents in the “others” category unanimously reported low perceptions (100%). Overall, while patients with school, undergraduate, and postgraduate education demonstrated relatively positive to moderate satisfaction levels, professionals and others reflected strong dissatisfaction. These findings suggest that education level influences perception patterns, though statistical testing would be required to determine whether the observed differences are significant.

CHI-SQUARE TEST

Test	Chi-Square	Difference	Contingency Coefficient	Sig.
Result	9.687	8	0.131	0.326

A Chi-Square test was conducted to examine the association between educational qualification and patients’ perceptions regarding the affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services. The results ($\chi^2 = 9.687$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.326$) indicate that the association is not statistically significant, suggesting that educational qualification does not have a significant effect on patients’ perceptions of these service parameters. The Contingency Coefficient value (0.131) indicates a very weak association between educational qualification and perception. These findings imply that patients’ perceptions are largely independent of their educational background, and hospital management should focus on improving overall service quality rather than tailoring interventions based on educational levels.

Annual Income

The Chi-Square test of independence is conducted to explore the association between patients’ income levels and their perceptions of affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services.

H_0 : There is no significant association between Income and their level of perceptions regarding the affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services.

TABLE 5: ANNUAL INCOME AND LEVEL OF PERCEPTION

Annual Income	Level of Perception			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Below Rs. 2 Lakh	22	69	42	133
	16.5%	51.9%	31.6%	100.0%
Rs. 2 Lakh-3Lakh	18	41	34	93
	19.4%	44.1%	36.6%	100.0%
Rs. 3 Lakh- 4 Lakh	27	68	48	143
	18.9%	47.6%	33.6%	100.0%
Above Rs. 4 Lakh	41	106	84	231
	17.7%	45.9%	36.4%	100.0%
Total	108	284	208	600
	18.0%	47.3%	34.7%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data

The analysis of perception levels across different annual income groups reveals relatively consistent patterns with some minor variations. Among respondents earning below Rs. 2 lakh, more than half (51.9%) expressed moderate perceptions, followed by 31.6% with high perceptions and 16.5% with low perceptions, reflecting a moderately positive outlook. In the Rs. 2–3 lakh group, 44.1% reported moderate perceptions, 36.6% high, and 19.4% low, showing a slightly higher inclination towards positive perceptions compared to the lowest income group. Respondents in the Rs. 3-4 lakh category displayed a similar pattern, with 47.6% moderate, 33.6% high, and 18.9% low, again suggesting balanced but favorable views. Among those earning above Rs. 4 lakh, 45.9% reported moderate perceptions, 36.4% high, and 17.7% low, indicating that higher-income respondents tend to express more positive perceptions than negative ones. Overall, across all income groups, moderate perceptions dominate, followed by high perceptions, while low perceptions remain the least common. The differences between income levels are marginal, suggesting that annual income does not substantially influence patients' satisfaction levels towards hospital services, as perceptions remain fairly consistent across income categories.

CHI-SQUARE TEST

Test	Chi-Square	Difference	Contingency Coefficient	Sig.
Result	5.232	6	0.97	0.356

A Chi-Square test was conducted to examine the association between annual income and patients' perceptions regarding the affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services. The results ($\chi^2 = 5.232$, $df = 6$, $p = 0.356$) indicate that the association is not

statistically significant, suggesting that annual income does not have a significant effect on patients' perceptions of these service parameters. The Contingency Coefficient value (0.097) indicates a very weak association between income and perception. These findings imply that patients' perceptions are largely independent of their income levels, and efforts to enhance service satisfaction should focus on overall hospital service quality rather than income-based interventions.

Frequency of Visit to Eye Hospital

The Chi-Square test of independence is employed to analyze whether the frequency of visit to the eye hospital (first time, occasionally, and often) is associated with patients' perceptions of affordability, accessibility, and transparency of services.

H_0 : There is no significant association between Frequency of Visit to Eye Hospital and their level of perceptions regarding the affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services.

TABLE 6: FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO EYE HOSPITAL AND LEVEL OF PERCEPTION

Frequency of Visit to Eye Hospital	Level of Perception			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
First Time	66	166	123	355
	18.6%	46.8%	34.6%	100.0%
Occasionally	20	61	40	121
	16.5%	50.4%	33.1%	100.0%
Often	22	57	45	124
	17.7%	46.0%	36.3%	100.0%
Total	108	284	208	600
	18.0%	47.3%	34.7%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data

The analysis of perception levels based on the frequency of visits to the eye hospital indicates a fairly consistent pattern across all groups. Among first-time visitors, 46.8% reported moderate perceptions, 34.6% expressed high perceptions, and 18.6% reflected low perceptions, suggesting that initial experiences are generally balanced and moderately positive. Respondents who visit the hospital occasionally showed a similar distribution, with 50.4% reporting moderate perceptions, 33.1% high perceptions, and only 16.5% low

perceptions, indicating slightly more favorable views compared to first-time visitors. Those who visit the hospital often also reflected comparable patterns, with 46.0% moderate perceptions, 36.3% high perceptions, and 17.7% low perceptions, suggesting that frequent visits do not significantly alter overall satisfaction levels. Overall, across all categories of visit frequency, moderate perceptions remain dominant, followed by high perceptions, with low perceptions consistently being the least common. This uniformity implies that the frequency of hospital visits does not have a substantial impact on patients' satisfaction, as perceptions remain steady regardless of how often patients engage with hospital services.

CHI-SQUARE TEST

Test	Chi-Square	Difference	Contingency Coefficient	Sig.
Result	5.650	4	0.101	0.289

A Chi-Square test was conducted to examine the association between the frequency of visits to the eye hospital and patients' perceptions regarding the affordability, accessibility, and transparency of hospital services. The results ($\chi^2 = 5.650$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.289$) indicate that the association is not statistically significant, suggesting that the frequency of visits does not significantly influence patients' perceptions of these service parameters. The Contingency Coefficient value (0.101) indicates a very weak association between visit frequency and perception. These findings imply that patients' perceptions are largely independent of how often they visit the hospital, and efforts to enhance patient satisfaction should focus on general service improvements rather than visit frequency.

Findings of the Study

- ① A majority of patients (47.3%) reported a moderate level of perception regarding affordability, accessibility, and transparency of services.
- ① About 34.7% of patients expressed high perception, indicating satisfaction with service delivery.
- ① Socio-economic variables such as age, gender, educational qualification, income, and frequency of visits showed no significant association with perception levels.
- ① Moderate perceptions across all demographic groups suggest scope for service enhancement in selected hospitals.
- ① Transparency in billing and communication emerged as a critical area influencing patient trust.

Suggestions

- 🕒 Eye care hospitals should enhance transparent communication regarding treatment procedures, costs, and billing details to strengthen patient trust and confidence.
- 🕒 Hospitals may improve accessibility and affordability by reducing waiting time, streamlining appointment systems, and offering cost-effective treatment packages for economically weaker patients.

Conclusion

The present study highlights the importance of affordability, accessibility, and transparency in shaping patients' perceptions of eye care hospital services in Tamil Nadu. The findings reveal that most patients hold moderate to high perceptions of hospital services, indicating general satisfaction with service delivery. However, the presence of a considerable proportion of patients with moderate perceptions suggests opportunities for further improvement. The absence of significant associations between socio-economic factors and perception levels implies that patient satisfaction is influenced more by service quality than by demographic characteristics. Transparent communication, reasonable pricing, and convenient access to services are essential for enhancing patient experience and trust. Eye care hospitals must continuously evaluate patient feedback and adopt patient-centered strategies to improve service delivery. By strengthening affordability, accessibility, and transparency, hospitals can not only enhance patient satisfaction but also promote long-term sustainability and excellence in healthcare services.

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