Reviewer's report

Title: Patient Satisfaction in Marmara University Outpatient Chemotherapy Unit in Istanbul Turkey

Authors:

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Reviewer: Dr Sande Gracia Jones

Level of interest: A paper of considerable general medical or scientific interest

Advice on publication: Accept without revision

The study by Turhal, Efe, Gumus, Aliustaoglu, Karamanoglu and Sengoz on "Patient Satisfaction in Marmara University Outpatient Chemotherapy Unit in Istanbul Turkey" is extremely interesting because there are very few published studies that have explored oncology patients' satisfaction with care in Turkey. The authors have conducted a scientifically sound study that delineates the specific areas that need improvement, in relation to patients' perceptions of the excess time expended to schedule appointments or obtain diagnostic test results.

Discretionary revisions

1. Format: Although the article reads well, I would recommend that a new section be added after the Introduction section. The new section would be Review of the Literature, and would include nearly all of the paragraphs presently contained in the Discussion section. I would suggest composing the Review of the Literature section in the following manner: First paragraph would be Paragraph 1 from the Discussion section. Second paragraph would be the present Paragraph 3 "In the last years..." from the Discussion section. Third paragraph would be the present paragraph 4 from the Discussion section, followed by the present Paragraph 2 from the Discussion section. I would follow this with a new paragraph that provides further information and description of the American College of Physicians "Patient Satisfaction Check Up" that that was used in this study. The next section following Review of the Literature would then be Materials and Methods.

2. Discussion: In the Discussion section I would expand about the data that was presented in the Results section. I would comment on the results demonstrating that 18% of the patients did not know what type of cancer they had. Does this indicate a need for further patient education, or does it denote a lack of factual information provided to patients by their primary care or oncology care provider? Is this related to a cultural bias on the part of the physician, patient or family? Since the educational level of participants was above the Turkish median, it would be interesting to have the researchers' interpretation of what these results are revealing about oncology care and oncology patients in Turkey. I would also comment on the strong points that were noted, in particularly the patients' perceptions of the health care team's attention, trust and courtesy. Are there specific factors that contributed to this (such as specialized oncology training of physicians and nurses, or perhaps a higher patient-to-care provider
ratio than is normally found in other specialty areas)? Again, the researchers' interpretation of the results reported would be of interest to the international reader. I would also expand upon potential reasons to explain why there was a difference in perception of the courtesy of the health care team versus the discourtesy of the secretary. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, what can be done to change this situation? Is further education or training required for the unit secretaries? I would have also liked to read about what could be done to improve other areas of patient concern, such as the excess time expended to schedule appointments or obtain diagnostic test results. The authors note that "the administrators have promised to address the problem areas", but I would have liked to have read some recommendations or specific action plans for change from the authors.

Compulsory revisions
1. There are no compulsory revisions.

Overall assessment.
The conclusions drawn are adequately supported by the data shown. Sufficient details are provided to allow replication of the work and comparison with related analyses. The manuscript generally adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data disposition, although the reviewer has suggested the addition of a Review of the Literature section and an expansion of the Discussion section. Although there are some grammatical variances, the writing in general is acceptable.

Competing interests:
None declared.