

**ASSESSMENT OF PATIENT SATISFACTION ON THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY COMMUNITY PHARMACIES IN AND AROUND PULIKKAL, KERALA**

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ABSTRACT

This study was planned to assess the patient satisfaction on the services provided by the community pharmacies at Pulikkal Panchayath – Kerala. A questionnaire was prepared with 10 questions which is helpful to measure the patient satisfaction level on the services like, availability of drugs, time taken for billing and dispensing, approach of pharmacist, advices on current health problem / general advices on medicine, location and layout of the pharmacy refund system, counselling service on side effects. A total of hundred filled questionnaire were collected back and the analysis of answers were done. Patients expressed that they were satisfied with the availability of the medicine in most of the pharmacies, and also the time taken for billing and dispensing of medicine. 38% of respondents were satisfactory in approach of the pharmacist. The locations of all pharmacies were very much convenient to the patient. Anyway most of the patients (37%) were not satisfied on services like advices on current health problem, general advices on medicine and the counselling service on side effects of drugs. Considering all the factors overall rating of the pharmacy was good (40%).

Key Words: Patient Satisfaction, Community Pharmacy, Pulikkal, Kerala

INTRODUCTION

Pharmacy is the health profession that links, the health services, with the chemical sciences. The scope of the pharmacist include, traditional roles such as compounding and dispensing medications along with modern roles such as safe and effective use of medication and provision of drug information to develop maximum treatment output. Community pharmacy denotes the pharmacy services established in a community centre. The pharmacist who is working in a community pharmacy is the health professional who is most accessible to the public. They supply medicines in accordance with a prescription or if legally permitted dispense without a prescription. Counselling of the patient at the time of dispensing prescription and non-prescription drugs also carried out by community pharmacist. This type of counselling is very effective. He can educate the society about the need for proper use of medication and also about health care. But, in India it is clear that, the pharmacist merely involved in pharma

trading and not in health care services. The community pharmacies are generally called as medical and general stores, where only dispensing of medicines takes place. In some developed countries, pharmacists are rated among one of the top three professionals who serve the society. This recognition of the pharmacist is due to their professional services intended to improve the health of the society.

The interest of community pharmacist in trade than profession may be due to his unawareness about his roles and responsibilities. Community pharmacy is an important area of operation of pharmacy practise. It is also an influential and image creating area of pharmacy profession. However, community pharmacies are so focussed on business orientation and acting like a business centre. So here a study was conducted with the primary objective of investigation, how well the patients are satisfied with the services provided by community pharmacy. The aim of this study is to measure the patient satisfaction

with community pharmacy services at Pulikkal Panchayath. Community pharmacy is an important area of operation of pharmacy practice. It is also an influential and image creating area of pharmacy profession. However, community pharmacies are so far focussed on business orientation and acting like a business centre. A study was conducted with the primary objective of investigating of how well the patients are satisfied with services provided by community pharmacy.

METHODS

The findings and discussion presented in the paper are based on the data collected from a study on patient satisfaction on community pharmacy services at Pulikkal Panchayath of Kerala. The study was carried out in community pharmacies of Pulikkal Panchayath with 100 customers during the period of September – December of 2010. Research instrument used in the study was a questionnaire which contains 10 questions and answering options was designed centred on the satisfactory factors of the patient with the services provided by community pharmacy. It was framed in such a way that the respondent has to give their opinion on the current situation. The questionnaire had an initial section to collect information on demography of patient. Suitable options of answers were provided to evaluate each question. Questionnaire was prepared both in English and Malayalam, the local language of Kerala. The patients visiting community pharmacy, who agreed to participate in the study were given these questionnaire at randomly chosen days. The purpose of study was explained to every patient. The completely filled questionnaire was collected from patients and it was subjected to statistical analysis. The necessary interpretation was done and outcome of the study was assessed using columns and graphs.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to assess the patient satisfaction on community pharmacy services. During the study we came to know that all the respondents visit the pharmacy at least once in a month for their drug needs. So it is important to assess their satisfaction. In our study, the total number of respondents was 100 and most of them were in an age group between 31-40 that is 52% of the respondents. In our study, a total of 73% male and 27% female patients were participated and educational status of most of them were below higher secondary, that is 40% of the total respondents.

For a question on the availability of prescribed drugs 68% of the patients have responded

that they always got most of the drugs from the pharmacies they are visiting in our study area, none of the respondents have the opinion that they didn't receive the medication from the pharmacy. For a question on the opinion on time taken for billing/dispensing of the medicine, 56% of the patients responded that it is fairly good, 15% rated as very good and 8% as very poor. From this study, our group came to know that only 38% of patients in the particular region were satisfactory in the approach of pharmacists throughout their visit in the pharmacy, 28% says that need improvement in the approach of the pharmacist. 37% of the patients were not satisfied on the services like advice on current health problem/general advice on medicine. They say that, they are not getting very well advice from the pharmacy they are visiting in the particular region and 28% of the patients claimed that the pharmacy never used the particular service. In a survey conducted by Ramesh Adapu & B G Nagavi⁷, came to know that majority of the patients are not receiving any kind of storage instructions from their pharmacist.

The result of their investigation indicated that maximum respondents feel that pharmacist is only a trader. For the question on convenience of location, 72% of patients have responded that it is very convenient for them, and for 28% only the location is inconvenient. 56% of the respondents have satisfactory option on the layout of the pharmacy an only 8% were not satisfied. In this study it was observed that only 3% of the patients rated the refund system of the pharmacy as very good, but 52% of the patients rated as good, an 36% of the patients rated it as poor. According to a study conducted by Geetha Jayaprakash Et-al⁹, convenience of location, good for efficient services, staff appearance, friendliness, knowledge and short waiting time for dispensing help in developing more general satisfaction in community pharmacy services. For the question regarding counselling services on side effects provided by the pharmacy, no one rated service as very good and also 51% of patients rated as poor. So the counselling services of the pharmacies need improvement.

The study conducted by Geetha Jayaprakash Et-al, concluded that, many practising pharmacists are unaware of their professional responsibilities. By taking all of the above into account, the rating of the pharmacies by the patients was as follows: 40% of the patients responded that all the services provided by the pharmacies were good, and only 1% indicated that the pharmacies providing poor services and the remaining responses include fair-30%, very good-19% and excellent 10%. So we can reach in a conclusion that most of the patients in the particular

region were satisfied with the services provided by the pharmacies.

CONCLUSION

From the study on the assessment of patient satisfaction on the services provided by community pharmacies in Pulikkal, our group concluded that most of the services by the pharmacies were satisfactory, and anyway in some aspects, it needs improvement. The factors like counselling service on side effects of drugs, advice on current health problem, and general advice on medicine must be improved for better healthcare of the patients.

Pharmacists are considered as health care professionals. This is because of their professional services. The trade attitude of pharmacists should be shifted towards the pharmaceutical care services for the improvement of healthcare. Many studies have proven that, pharmaceutical sales, and profits are increased in the pharmacies, where the pharmaceutical care services such as patient counselling is provided. In order to improve the status of pharmacy profession relevant authorities should motivate the pharmacists to provide pharmaceutical care services by imparting necessary training through continuous professional development programmes.

Table 1: Age wise distribution of respondents

| Sl. No. | Age | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|-------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 20-30 | 24 | 24 |
| 2 | 31-40 | 52 | 52 |
| 3 | 41-50 | 24 | 24 |

Fig 1: Age wise distribution of respondents

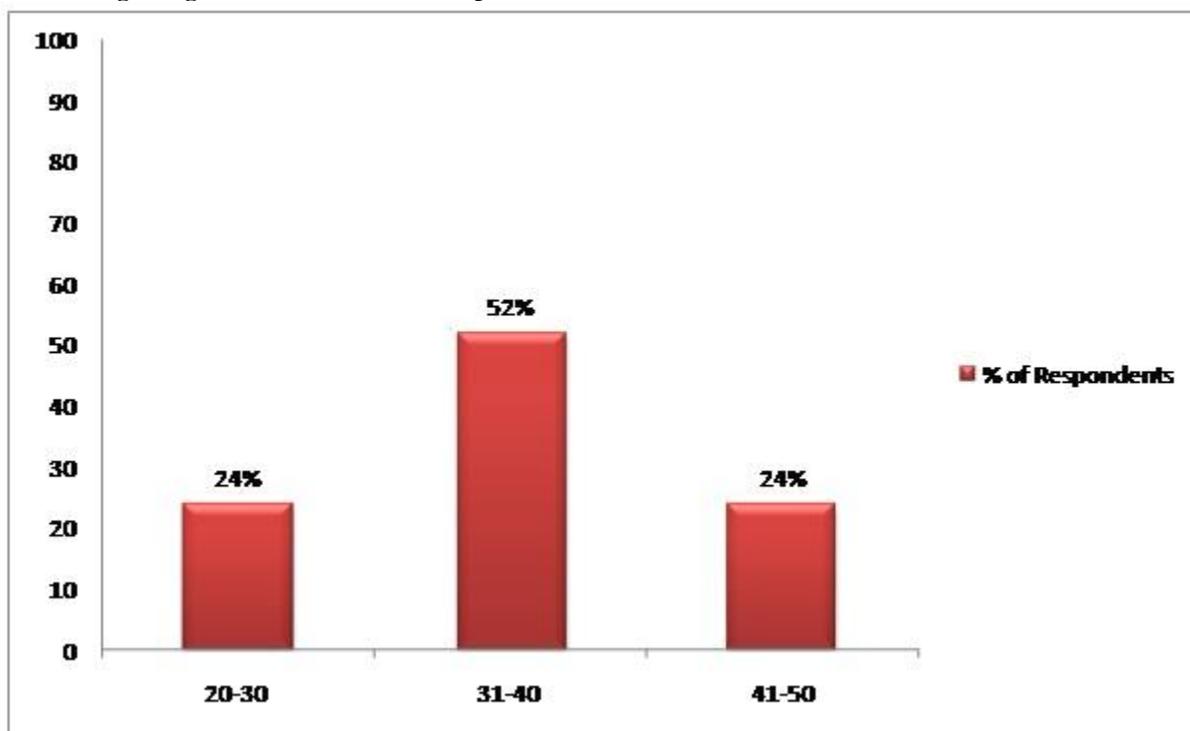


Table 2: sex wise distribution of respondents

| Sl. No. | sex | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|--------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Male | 73 | 73 |
| 2 | Female | 27 | 27 |

Fig 2: sex wise distribution of respondents

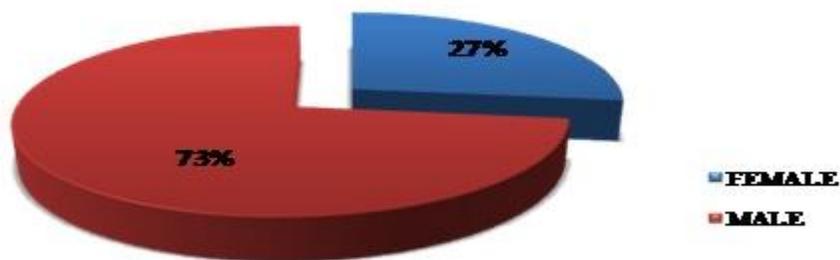


Table 3: Education status of respondents

| Sl. No. | Education Status | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | SSLC | 40 | 40 |
| 2 | HSE | 28 | 28 |
| 3 | Degree | 23 | 23 |
| 4 | PG | 9 | 9 |

Fig 3: Education status of respondents

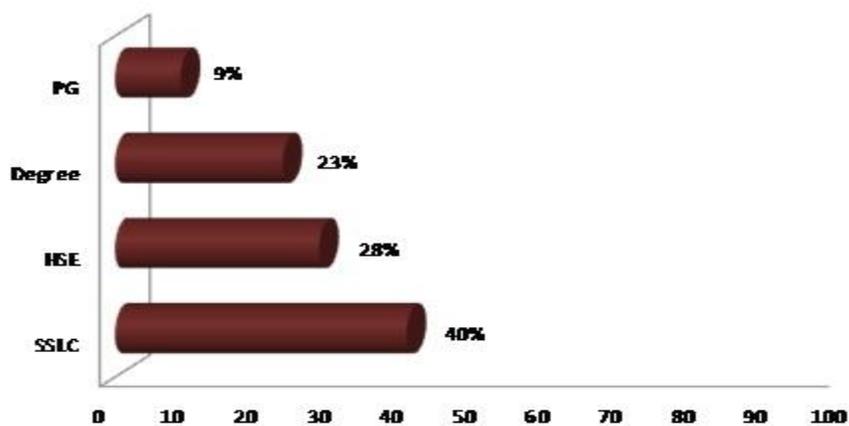


Table 4: Availability of prescribed drugs in pharmacy

| Sl. No. | Response | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | No | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Some drugs | 11 | 11 |
| 3 | Most of the drugs | 68 | 68 |
| 4 | yes | 21 | 21 |

Fig 4: Availability of prescribed drugs in pharmacy

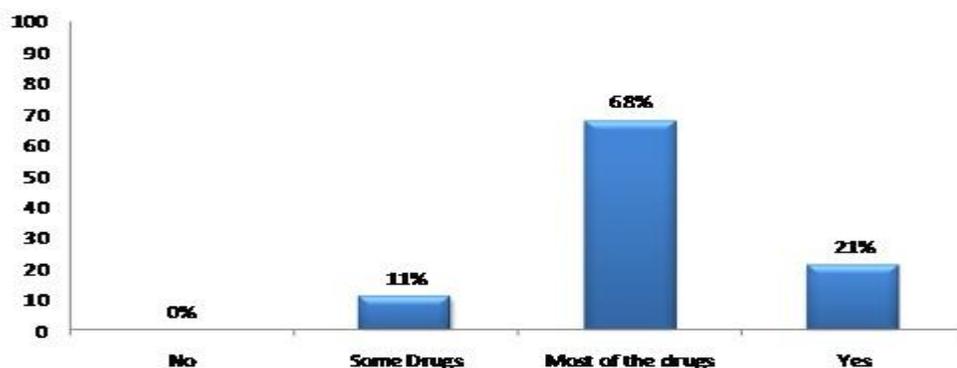


Table 5: Time taken for billing & dispensing

| Sl. No. | Response | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Very poor | 8 | 8 |
| 2 | Fairly poor | 21 | 21 |
| 3 | Fairly good | 56 | 56 |
| 4 | Very good | 15 | 15 |

Fig 5: Time taken for billing & dispensing

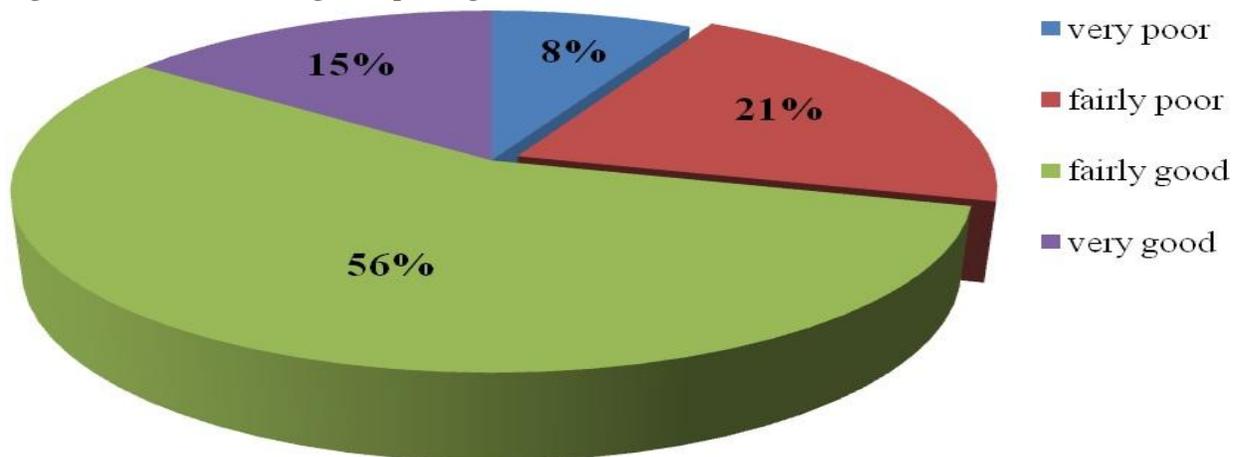


Table 6: Opinions on advices for current health problem/general advice on medicine

| Sl. No. | Response | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|---------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Very well | 20 | 20 |
| 2 | Fairly well | 15 | 15 |
| 3 | Not very well | 37 | 37 |
| 4 | Never used | 28 | 28 |

Fig 6: Opinions on advices for current health problem/general advice on medicine

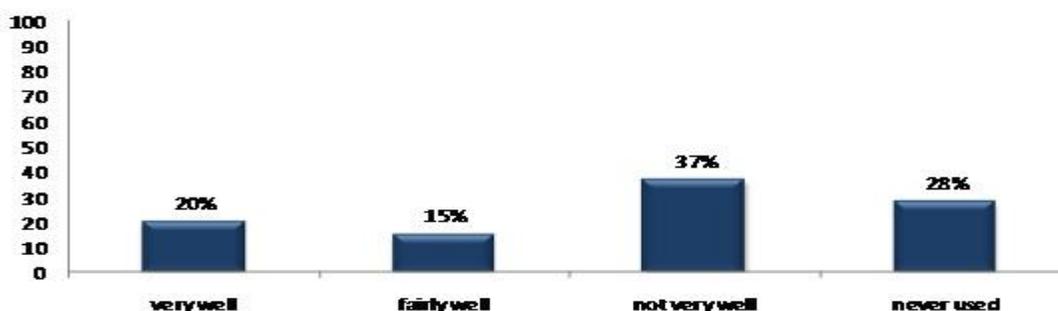


Table 7: Approach of pharmacist

| Sl. No. | Response | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Need improvement | 28 | 28 |
| 2 | Satisfactory | 38 | 38 |
| 3 | Good | 29 | 29 |
| 4 | Excellent | 5 | 5 |

Fig 7: Approach of pharmacist

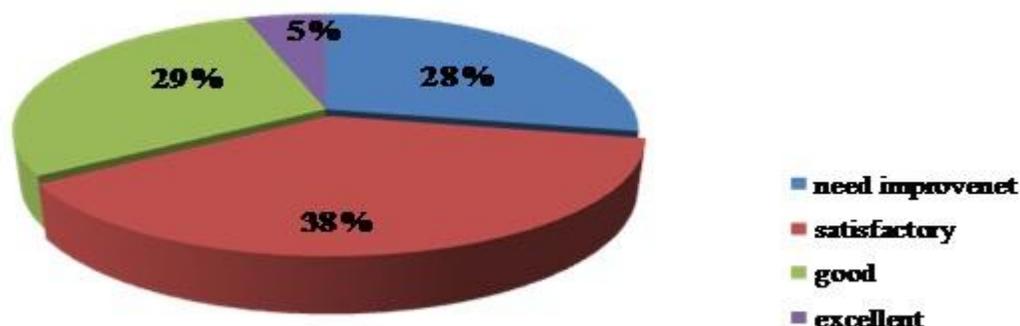


Table 8: Convenience on location of pharmacy

| Sl. No. | Response | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|----------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Yes | 72 | 72 |
| 2 | No | 28 | 28 |

Fig 8: Convenience on location of pharmacy

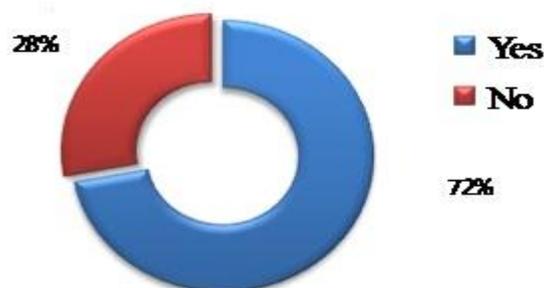


Table 9: Conveniences on layout of pharmacy

| Sl. No. | Response | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Yes | 36 | 36 |
| 2 | To some extend | 56 | 56 |
| 3 | No | 8 | 8 |

Fig 9: Conveniences on layout of pharmacy

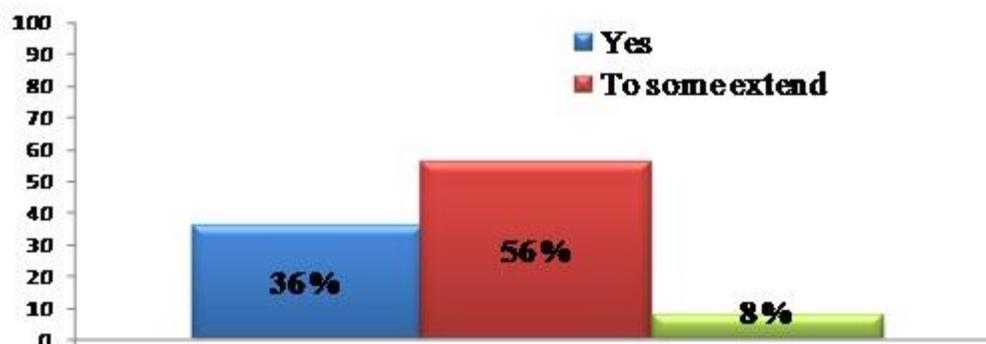


Table 10: Rating of refund system

| Sl. No. | Response | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Very good | 3 | 3 |
| 2 | Good | 52 | 52 |
| 3 | Poor | 36 | 36 |
| 4 | Not experienced | 9 | 9 |

Fig 10: Rating of refund system

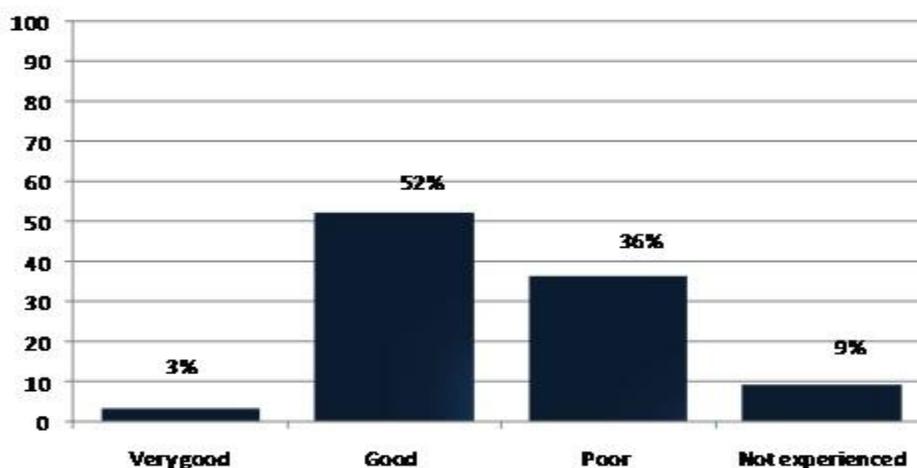


Table 11: Response on inconvenience of the patient about the visit to the pharmacy

| Sl. No. | Response | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Never | 45 | 45 |
| 2 | Sometimes | 46 | 46 |
| 3 | Many times | 9 | 9 |
| 4 | Always | - | - |

Fig 11: Response on inconvenience of the patient about the visit to the pharmacy

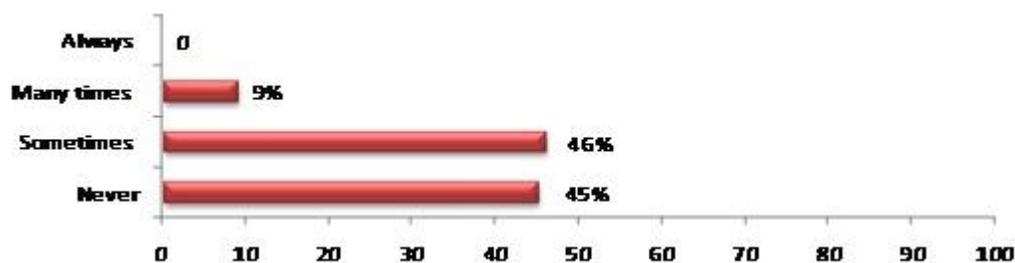


Table 12: Counseling services provided by the pharmacy

| Sl. No. | Response | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Very good | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Good | 26 | 26 |
| 3 | Poor | 51 | 51 |
| 4 | Never experienced | 23 | 23 |

Fig 12: Counselling services provided by the pharmacy

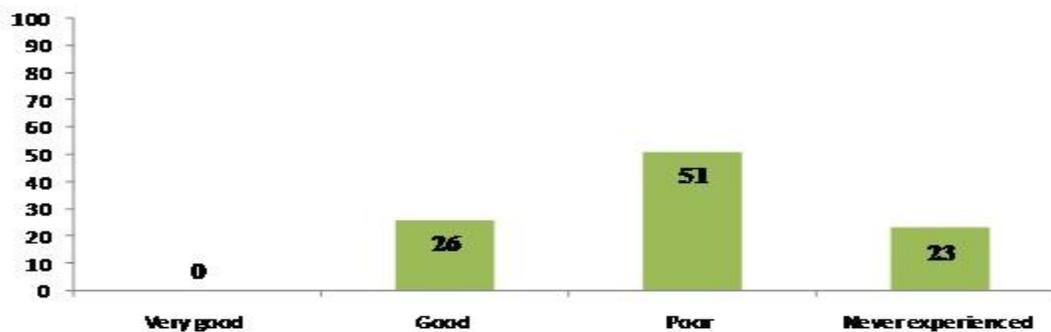
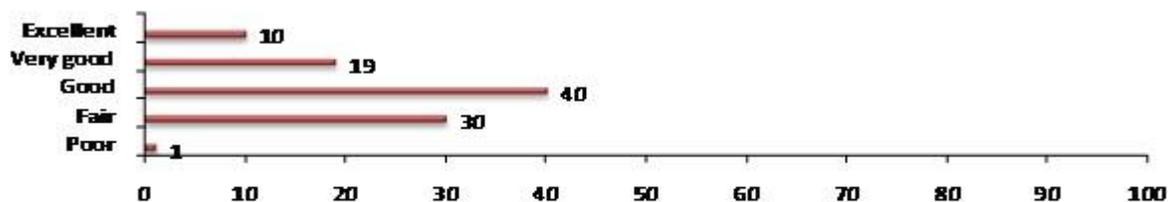


Table 13: Considering all the above factors, overall rating of the pharmacy

| Sl. No. | Response | No. of Respondents | % of Respondents |
|---------|-----------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Poor | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | Fair | 30 | 30 |
| 3 | Good | 40 | 40 |
| 4 | Very good | 19 | 19 |
| 5 | Excellent | 10 | 10 |

Fig 13: Considering all the above factors, overall rating of the pharmacy**REFERENCES**

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