PATIENT SATISFACTION NOT JUST DETERMINED BY THEIR HEALTH-CARE EXPERIENCE

GENEVA – A survey measuring patient satisfaction in 21 European countries has investigated what determines people’s satisfaction with the health-care system above and beyond their experience as patients.

Austria and Spain, for example, have universally accessible, publicly financed health systems, characterized by hospitals with salaried physicians, yet only 10.8% of Spaniards claimed to be very satisfied with the health care that they receive, compared with 70.4% of Austrians.

According to co-author Emre Ozaltin, from the Harvard School of Public Health in the United States of America, a patient’s actual experience (measured by health system responsiveness), while significant, determines just 10% of their degree of satisfaction. “Much of the variation is explained by external factors such as patient expectations, their self-reported health status and personality, as well as broader societal factors,” he says.

“Our findings show that patient satisfaction surveys do not necessarily provide useful information for improving the quality of health care.”

Read the research paper here:
http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/4/07-050401.pdf

The Bulletin of the World Health Organization is an international journal of public health with a special focus on developing countries. It is one of the world’s leading public health journals and the flagship periodical of the World Health Organization.

Further items in this Bulletin issue include:

- Fraud expert, Jim Gee, says health-care systems in developed countries could be losing up to 8% of their expenditure in fraud.
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