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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.

- Why do people with mental illness miss out on essential health care?
- The high-security laboratory network working on emerging diseases across Asia
- Health coordination in crises: the United Nations approach
- Targeted training of health workers for marginalized populations
- How useful are simulations of influenza pandemics?
- The challenges of estimating maternal deaths
- User fees create barriers to AIDS treatment

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