

ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades, managing waiting time in health care settings is a concept that has been receiving attention among researchers, health care practitioners and administrators over the years. Waiting in line has become an integral part of health care services and it is considered to be central to assessing patient satisfaction. Patients experience a greater squeeze on their time, short waits seem longer than even before. This queuing situation is worst in publicly funded or highly busy hospitals and managing it has become a serious challenge. The patients consider waiting as inactive, wasted or lost opportunity time. It was found that the patient satisfaction decreased with longer waiting times. A significant effect of waiting time and the patient satisfaction has been mentioned as a part and partial of health service care. Longer waiting times are associated with lower patient satisfaction; an indication of poor health care service.

A cross-sectional study involving 344 patients at the outpatient department at Kiboga Hospital was done to determine the factors contributing to the waiting time at the hospital. A semi-structured interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect data on the factors contributing to the waiting time at the hospital. The study population was systematically selected. This involved selecting respondents through an orderly scheme at a regular interval.

The waiting time at Kiboga Hospital is long which is common in most public health facilities run by the government. The demographic factor contributing to waiting time at the outpatient department was the level of education of the patient. The socio-economic factors contributing to waiting time included; cultural acceptability of waiting time especially when equitable privatization of health care needs becomes a public concern which influences patients to expect to wait whenever they visit the health facility, and afford-ability of health services. Health facility factors such as congestion at health units mainly due to high numbers of patients yet that of health workers is small; limited availability of medicines and medical supplies which slow normal functioning of health facilities as well as absence of health workers contribute to lengthy waiting time at health facilities.