

**ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES RENDERED TO
PATIENTS IN PUBLIC HEALTH FACILITIES IN GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT,
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE AT SOUTH AFRICA.**

By

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ABSTRACT

Background: Majority of the people in developing countries like South Africa do not afford health insurance due to poverty, as a result they depend on public health care services. It is often felt that developing countries need to improve their quality of health care services.

Aims: The aim of the study was to assess the quality of health care services rendered to in-patients in public health facilities in Gert Sibande District, Mpumalanga Province at South Africa.

Methods: The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional design. The study population was 240 patients admitted for at least one day at public hospitals in Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province from the age of 18 to 80 years. The hospitals and the participants were selected using stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire and analysed using SPSS (Version 22). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to summarise the data. Reliability, validity and ethical considerations were ensured.

Results:

Of the 240 respondents, 72(30%) were males and 168(70%) were females. In the four study settings, 86.7% of patients at Ermelo, 85.2% at Carolina, 81.5% at Embhuleni and 68% at Piet Retief hospitals indicated that they were satisfied with the wearing of gloves ($p=0.015$). Whilst majority of patients at Ermelo and Carolina were satisfied (94% and 77% respectively) with doctors waiting times, 60% and 49% of the patients at Embhuleni and Piet Retief respectively indicated that they were dissatisfied ($p=0.000$).

Conclusion:

The study has revealed that there is a lot of improvement regarding accessibility to health care services in the Gert Sibande district since 1994 after the attainment of democracy in South Africa, however there are still challenges to be addressed. In this regard, the government is urged to address the issues of infection control, long waiting times to access health facilities, shortage of doctors in rural hospitals, unsatisfactory helpfulness and uncaring attitude of some healthcare staff and inhospitality of hospital environment.

Keywords: Access, Assessment, Healthcare, Hospital, Patients, Quality and Services.