

## **PATIENT'S SATISFACTION TOWARDS PRIVATE HOSPITAL'S FOOD SERVICE IN MELAKA**

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### **Abstract**

Hospital food plays an important role in patient recovery and well-being. Nowadays, most patients who come to hospital have exposure and knowledge of foodservice through various sources. Foodservice quality can also influence patients' satisfaction with their overall hospital experience. Patient satisfaction with foodservice must be evaluated in order to provide a high quality service that is able to meet consumers' needs. Based on a number of recent studies, patient's at private's hospital believe they have high knowledge of hospital practice especially about the menus served, food ingredients and delivery system to them.

This study was conducted to assess patient's satisfaction in the relationship between certification of menus served, food ingredients used and the delivery system applied in their food service department. Therefore, the study aims to see the patient's satisfaction at private hospital foodservice around the state of Melaka whether it affects or does not to the patient toward menus, food ingredients and delivery system at the private hospital. The researchers found that the menus served to the patients are interrelated with the problem of malnutrition if the foods served didn't meet their expectation. Meanwhile, most of previous research agreed that the used of fresh, organic and high quality ingredient may increase the acceptability and reducing the plate waste. In addition, there is a commercial method that applied by most private hospital called room service as this method aimed to reduce food wastage since the patients are permissible to choose their own menu. This study is expected to help especially the private hospital foodservice around the state of Melaka to better and orderly implement the patient's satisfaction in the private hospital foodservice.

**Keywords:** *Hospital food service, Menus, Food Ingredients, Delivery System, Patient's Satisfaction*

### **Introduction**

Food is important to quality of life; it also is a basic human need and fundamental to health (Jeong & Seo, 2014). Food service is essential part of patient rights. Adequate meal consumption is necessary to aid in patient recovery. Hospital food is also an example of healthy and nutritious meals that are tailored to patients' health conditions (Dall'Oglio, Nicolo, Di Ciommo, et al, 2015). Nutritional care, safe and healthy food in hospitals encourages patients to eat, helps them to recover from their illness and enhances their quality of life (Fatemeh, *et al.*, 2015).

Hospital food service is a department that caters the foods to the staff, patients and their peoples by attending to a diet therapy regime and enhancing nutrition application (Goncalves et al, 2015). Hospital foodservice is also known to be an important element in determining a patient's overall perception and component in the hospital management of patients (Aminuddin, Vijayakumaran & Abdul Razak, 2018). However, this current research is focusing in the patient's satisfaction towards the food offered by food service department.

The emerging of healthcare industry may contribute to the existence of hospital as a tourism attraction called as medical tourism. In Melaka itself, there are four private hospitals in Melaka named: Pantai hospital, Putra Specialist Hospital, Mahkota Medical Centre and Oriental Melaka Straits Medical Centre Hospital.

Based on Torky et al (2015), the effectiveness of hospital service is depending on the patient's satisfaction from various aspects such as in medical procedure, service and also foods they serves to patient. Therefore the extent of satisfaction can be achieved if the service offered by the service provider especially from the hospital institution met their expectation.

Patients satisfaction with hospital food service is difficult to assess, particularly because each patient has their expectations. According to Torky et al (2015), the quality of food served by any food service

establishment especially for the hospitals may effect the patient's satisfaction. The contributions to patient satisfaction are food quality, meal service, staff issues, and the physical eating environment (Aminuddin, Vijayakumaran, & Abdul Razak, 2018).

Moreover, the foods in hospitals are terrible, limited menus, tasteless and limited cooking method. The hospital food is often negatively perceived as cold, tasteless, poorly presented and badly served (Ahmed, Jones, Redmond, et al, 2015). Hospital expectations often place the food and nutrition service as an undervalued support service, even though changes and improvements in hospital diets and nutritional care can prevent nutritional aggravations that have a negative impact on the length of hospital stay and hospitalization costs (Dall'Oglio, Nicolo, Di Ciommo, et al, 2015). Previous studies have found that hospital's foodservice can increase patient's satisfaction (El Sherbiny, Ibrahim & Hewedi, 2017). Hospital food service generates about 40% food waste which is among the highest sector in food service industry (Kwabena, 2015). Previous study found that almost half of the food served in hospitals is wasted because of the taste, portion size, patient's appetite, or staff service (Johns, Hartwell, & Morgan, 2010).

This study reviews patient's satisfaction as a relationship in the menus, food ingredients and the foods delivery system with private hospital's foodservice. Thus, this study identifies the role of patients's satisfaction in the relationship between menus, food ingredints and the food delivery system towards private hospital's foodservice in Melaka. The model developed in this study is expected to address the inadequacy of previous studies on factors affecting patients's satisfaction towards private hospital's foodservice.

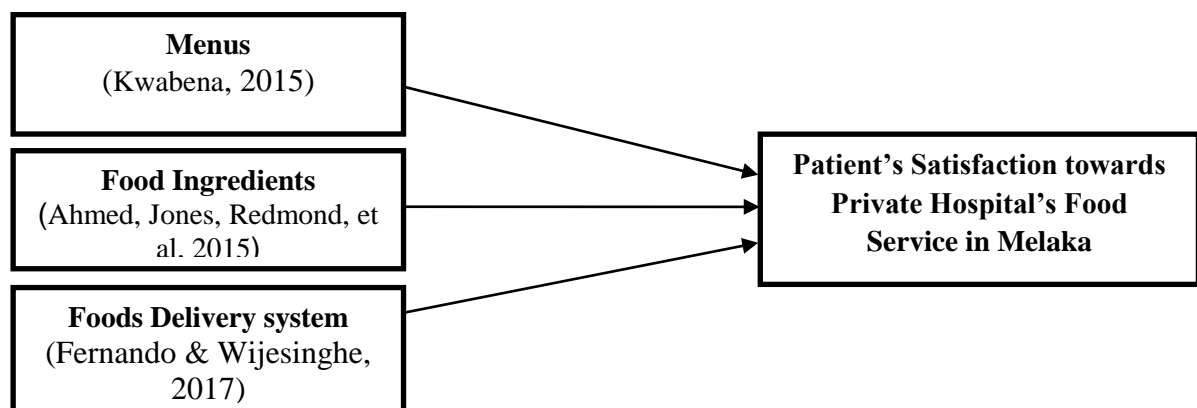
## 1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This concept paper aimed to tackle these following objectives:

- i. To determine the relationship between menu and customer satisfaction towards food services in private hospitals in Melaka
- ii. To determine the relationship between food ingredients and customer satisfaction towards food services in private hospitals in Melaka
- iii. To determine the relationship between foods delivery system and customer satisfaction towards food services in private hospitals in Melaka

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To identify the role of patient's satisfaction as intermediaries in the relationship between menus, food ingredients and food delivery system towards private hospital food service, researchers introduced a research framework developed based on literature studies, as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## **LITERATURE OVERVIEW**

### **Hospitals Foodservice**

Hospital food service is a department that responsible in producing foods for the patients. It is because in order to recover, the patients need balanced diet which healthy and nutritious instead of having medical supplies and treatment (Aminuddin et al, 2018). In explaining of the issue, it's quite a big challenge in order to keep improving the superiority of meals since the proper handling and process flow are essential. The provision of food to patients and associated levels of waste are often a priority focus in cost-management strategies (Otrej & Porter, 2016).

Moreover, Mentziou (2014) indicate that if the patients satisfied with the hospitals foods, hence their overall hospitalized experience will up to the expectation. Aminuddin et al (2018) suggested to measuring the patient's level of satisfaction able to define the acceptability of the service provided. It is supported by a research found that, the level of satisfaction towards hospital food service among the patients is 35.85-85% (Messina et al , 2013). The success of hospital food service is regarding to the patient's experience in consuming hospital food and in the same time the quantity of food waste is lower than usual (Torky et al, 2015).

### **Patient's Satisfaction**

Generally, a patient in the private hospital is a guest to the organization, due to the concept of the private hospital itself which is known as profit-oriented business. Hence to ensure the patient's satisfaction is a must. Based on Mangunsong and Junadi (2017), the term patient's satisfaction can be defined as valuation of happiness gathered by the patients during their hospitalized. This experience of satisfaction depends on various aspects such as treatment procedure, communication, quality of service, facilities provided, sociability and also food service (Mangunsong & Junadi, 2017). A research conducted by Mishra and Mishra (2014) defined that patients satisfaction is a marketing outcome since the utilization of service is interpreted by the perception rather than reality.

### **Menus and patient's satisfaction**

In hospitals, patients are at nutritional risk, meaning that they eat too little to maintain nutritional status, putting them at risk of complications related to under nutrition (Kwabena, 2015). Poor food intake is now recognized as an independent risk factor for hospital mortality and clinical dietitians struggle with maximizing patients' nutritional intake in the health care setting (Sally et al 2017). In addition, dissatisfied feeling toward foods served will make recovery delay, increasing of hospitalized fee and the most important is psychological effects (El Sherbiny, Ibrahim & Hewedi, 2017).

There are certain strategies suggested by Kwebana (2015) focusing in improving patient's adequacy towards menus served such as portion size ordering flexibility, reduction in portion size, variety menus selection and enhanced the quality of foods. Moreover, Mangunsong & Junadi (2017) revealed that there are several reason that may influence patient's food acceptance such as selective of food, temperature, food distribution time, portion of foods, hygiene of cutlery (fork, spoon, and dishes), and also the attitude of the food service personnel. Healthcare organisations and foodservice departments wishing to increase meal accuracy may consider implementing standardised menu formatting, which have shown positive results in studies with patient satisfaction. This proves that the menu has a relationship with customer satisfaction (Ottrey & Porter , 2016).

### **Food Ingredients with patient's satisfaction**

Procurement processes are essential in producing a high quality of food product. Starting from the food procurement process (raw material specification, supplier selection, purchasing, and receiving and storing), food production, food service, patient ordering, all have their causal factors on patient satisfaction (Mangunsong & Junadi, 2017).

A research done by Ahmed, Jones, Redmond, et al (2015) proved that 75% of healthcare personnel agree that the used of high quality of raw food material, fresh and organic increase the patients acceptability and the risk of food waste are lower. Moreover, this previous study found there are positive relationship between hospitals and suppliers affecting to the process and the quality. This proves that the food ingredient has a relationship with customer satisfaction (Dall'Oglio et al (2015).

### **Food delivery system with patient's satisfaction**

Traditionally, the food service delivery system commonly applied by the healthcare institution, is plated meal and bulk meal service. This system required the preparation, and meal's plating process done in kitchen and the meal will be distribute to the patients in ward using the portable warmer or trolley (Fernando & Wijesinghe, 2017). However, this system may regulate to higher food wastage and assumed as inefficient for customer focused. According to Fernando & Wijesinghe (2017), this problem occur due to the application of system itself, whereas the food distribute are based on cycle menu and disregarding patients satisfaction. Based on Sherbiny, Ibrahim & Hewedi (2017), today most of the hospitals are struggling in improving their food quality and food delivery method in order to achieve patient's satisfaction and the cost reduction.

In order to prevent from this kind of loss, the introduction of room service system that are more to patient-driven able to improve their satisfaction. Based on Sally et al (2017), room service is a new model of hospital food service which applied by most of private hospitals aimed to improve the patient's satisfaction and reduction of food waste. Room service method is the right solution in increasing their service standard, since the patients are given a choice in choosing their preferred meals according their specific diet (Fernando & Wijesinghe, 2017). Basically, the room service method is firstly invented by Mater Private Hospital Brisbane, Australia in 2013 and this system is very successful in reducing plate waste and increasing patient's satisfaction (Sally et al, 2017).

Room service has several advantages, such as improved patient control over food choices, improved patient satisfaction, improved foodtemperatures, increased foodservice employee pride in their job, decreased plate waste and decreased food cost (Maunder et al, 2015) Some research has shown the benefits of room service in decreasing food costs and waste while other research has evaluated the improvement in patient satisfaction (Marcason, 2012). This proves that the food delivery system has a relationship with customer satisfaction (Doorduijn, van Gameren, Vasse & de Roos, 2016).

### **Conclusion**

A patient in a private hospital is an asset. In order to fulfill their needs during hospitalization, several aspects should be taken into consideration. Saying that a real experience during this staying, rather than treatment procedure, foods 'memory' should up to their expectation. The menus served, the types of raw food ingredients used and food delivery system is a critical aspect for the food service department. A malnutrition risk is a big issue since the patients with different disease, specific diet needs and other aspect contribute to the food acceptance. In evaluating the quality of food served, certain attribute such as taste, freshness, portion size, aroma, texture and combination of food ingredients perhaps able to reduce the plate waste and increasing patient's satisfaction.

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