

The Empowered Patient Wants Shared Decision Making – How can System Dynamics Modeling Help?

Misagh Faezipour

Middle Tennessee State University
1301 E. Main St. Murfreesboro TN 37132
615-898-2110
misagh.faezipour@mtsu.edu

Keywords: patient satisfaction, patient participation, system dynamics, decision making

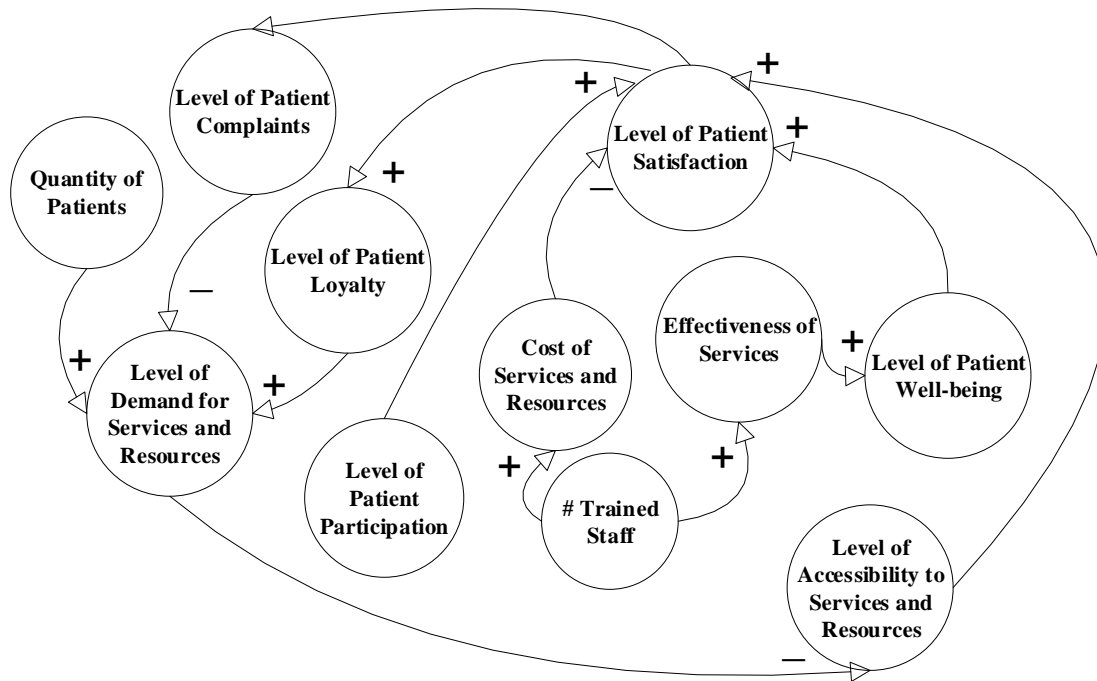
The social component of sustainability is one of the important areas in healthcare sustainability. The social component focuses on considerations such as equity, empowerment, accessibility, participation, cultural identity, and institutional stability. Patient satisfaction is a key factor in the social element. Patient satisfaction represents patient fulfillment in regards to the cost, accessibility to services and resources, and patient wellbeing. It is analogous to ‘customer satisfaction’. Paying detailed attention to the requirements is one of the most critical aspects when designing a product or offering a service. Making sure that we understand exactly what the customer or patient needs and offering that service to them and also including their idea and thought is also important. In a hospital environment, the quality, being on time, safety, cost, friendliness, the overall look of the office or facility, ethics, and several other factors would have impact on customer satisfaction and these would be factors that need to be considered among others. Various performance analytics and metrics scores such as Press Ganey, HCAHPS have been studied, compared and factors that would have impact on patient satisfaction as well as factors that patient satisfaction would affect have been identified (Faezipour, 2013).

Patient participation means participation and involvement of the patient in decision making in all steps of the treatment. It could also mean voicing thoughts about various treatment methods, which includes sharing information, feelings and signs and accepting health personnel instructions. It is recommended that patients be involved in decision making because it makes them feel more comfortable about their decisions. It will also leave them more satisfied with the treatment they are receiving and more engaged in their care (Vahdat et al., 2014). Eventually the engagement in the care will result in improvements in health and even save lives.

Shared decision making generates better decision quality and this will eventually result in a more efficient care. Patients’ knowledge will be enriched and patients will become more satisfied and comfortable with their decisions. Shared decision making is especially vital for patients in treating chronic conditions (Alden, 2014). When they become more familiar with their condition, they are more likely to follow the best treatment. Thus, shared decision making will lead to enhanced outcomes. Shared decision making also emphasizes safety and patients ensure that a procedure will not be performed if it does not satisfy the safety aspects (Coulter et al., 2008).

When patients are involved in the decision making they will search for the best option available with the better quality and least cost. This will be considered as a benchmarking performed by the patients. Healthcare organizations would want to place themselves within the choices that the patients will select to be able to stay in the competition. Therefore, the healthcare organizations can strive among other competitors and place themselves among the market in top places. With this approach quality and satisfaction improves while the cost decreases. Healthcare organizations can benefit from this approach.

This paper explores important factors and factor relationships in healthcare social sustainability related to patient satisfaction and patient participation using a system dynamics approach. A subset of the causal model related to patient satisfaction and shared decision making can be seen in Figure 1:



References

- Alden DL 2014. Decision aid influences on factors associated with patient empowerment prior to cancer treatment decision making. *Medical Decision Making* **34**(7):884-98.
- Coulter A, Parsons S, Askham J 2008. Where are the patients in decision-making about their own care? *Health Systems and Policy Analysis*, World Health Organization 2008 and World Health Organization, on behalf of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.
- Faezipour M, Ferreira S. A system dynamics perspective of patient satisfaction in healthcare 2013. *Procedia Computer Science*, **16**: 148-156.
- Vahdat S, Hamzehgardeshi L, Hessam S, Hamzehgardeshi Z 2014. Patient Involvement in Health Care Decision Making: A Review. *Iran Red Cres Med J* **16**(1): e12454.