

AGE-BASED DIFFERENCES IN SERVICE EXPECTATIONS: YOUNG VS. AGED PATIENTS IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS

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This research explores age related variations in service expectations among 350 patients (200 young: 18-35 years; 150 aged: 65 and above) at a Kolkata based hospital (privately owned). Young patients were more demanding technology-driven efficiency (M=4.32) but less satisfied (M=3.65) whereas the aged patients were more concerned with cleanliness (M=4.51), nursing attention (M=4.48), and physician continuity (M=4.42) with a higher satisfaction (M=4.12). Significant differences ($p < 0.001$) of a cross-sectional survey with a validated 25-item Likert-scale questionnaire ($\alpha > 0.85$) and SPSS independent t-tests were established: $t(348)$: efficiency (young > aged = 9.45), care basics (aged > young = -5.12 to -8.91). The results confirm the generational discrepancies, where young patients are less tolerant of waiting time and older patients attach importance to the relational fundamentals. Findings of the research support the idea of individualized approaches- technological improvements among the younger generation, customized treatment among the older adults- to increase satisfaction in individual healthcare practices.
