

**A STUDY OF MYANMAR PATIENTS' EXPERIENCE JOURNEY
BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN
BANGKOK**



**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY
2023**

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Thematic paper
entitled
**A STUDY OF MYANMAR PATIENTS' EXPERIENCE JOURNEY
BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN
BANGKOK**

was submitted to the College of Management, Mahidol University
for the degree of Master of Management

on
28 April 2024



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who provided me the possibility to complete this report. I owe a deep sense of gratitude to my teachers, professors and supervisor for their kindness in encouraging and advising to me to carry out this research successfully. Many thanks are extended to all interviewees who participate in my data collection.

I am extremely thankful to my parent, friends and colleagues who support throughout my research. I have to appreciate the guidance given by supervisor who has improved my paper presentation to be professional thanks to their good comments and advice with fast response.

The study has indeed helped me to explore more knowledgeable avenues related to my topic and I am sure it will help me and other researchers in the future for more research.

Aung Thu

A STUDY OF MYANMAR PATIENTS' EXPERIENCE JOURNEY BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN BANGKOK

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M.M (HEALTHCARE AND WELLNESS MANAGEMENT)

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ABSTRACT

Rapid growing of the medical tourism around the world after the pandemic situation and hospitals in Bangkok are also becoming the one of the choices for medical travelers. Among them, Myanmar patients are choosing treatment in Bangkok to achieve best treatment outcome. Both private and government hospitals are also trying to achieve global healthcare certificates by providing best quality care to Myanmar patients in different approaches. This study aims to analyze the experience journey of Myanmar patients who is taking treatment and who already took treatment in both private and government hospitals in Bangkok based on their expectation, outcome, satisfaction and their experience.

This research used main concepts in the data regarding Myanmar patients' experiences in private hospital, government hospital and services from private hospital, government hospital. This study used qualitative method via interviewing with 19 Myanmar nationality with different disease conditions. In the data analysis, most interviewees are helping to express their own experiences what they got in their journey and point of view. As the data result, most main reasons of Myanmar patients are flying to Bangkok for their treatment due to their trust on quality of care and services of hospital in Bangkok, cost effective and convenient to travel for both patient and their families as their attendant.

KEY WORDS: Myanmar Patients' experience/ Myanmar Patients' satisfaction/ Private Hospitals/ Government Hospitals/ Private and Government hospital services

32 pages

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Problem statement	1
1.2 Research questions	2
1.3 Research Objective	2
1.4 Expected Outcome	2
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	4
2.1 International hospitals in Bangkok	4
2.2 Government hospitals in Bangkok	5
2.3 Myanmar Patients' experiences and perceptions	5
2.4 Patient satisfaction	7
2.5 Quality of Thailand Healthcare Services	8
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	10
3.1 Research Design	10
3.2 Sampling Method	10
3.3 Data Collection	11
3.4 Interview Questions	11
3.5 Research questions for interview	11
3.6 Data Analysis Method	13
CHAPTER IV RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS	14
4.1 Interviewees' profile	14

CONTENTS (cont.)

	Page
4.2 Research Findings	16
4.2.1 Communication and information sharing	16
4.2.2 Quality of care and customer service	17
4.2.3 Timeliness of service and accessibility	18
4.2.4 Participation of patient's preferences and concerns	19
4.2.5 Difficulties and challenges	19
4.2.6 Medical expense affordability and financial consideration	20
4.2.7 Satisfaction overall	21
CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	23
5.1 Conclusions	23
5.1.1 Patients' Experiences at Private Hospitals in Bangkok	23
5.1.2 Patients' Experiences at Government Hospitals in Bangkok	24
5.2 Recommendation	24
5.2.1 Services at Private Hospital	24
5.2.2 Services at Government Hospital	25
5.3 Limitations	25
5.4 Future Research	26
REFERENCES	27
BIOGRAPHY	32

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
4.1	Demographic of interviewees	14



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the COVID pandemic, medical systems around the world face challenges and limitations, which has led the local healthcare infrastructure to enhance with advanced technology. Specifically, Bangkok, Thailand's capital, emerges as a key role in the ASEAN medical tourism which has excellent clinical outcome with patient satisfaction and experience.

Bangkok has quickly emerged as a main destination for medical tourism. Key feature is the combination of high-quality healthcare, advanced technology and affordable costs (Nancy, 2023) which attracts international patients who seek the best medical services out of their mother countries. The aim of Thai government's healthcare policies is to keep their country as a high-quality medical network for worldwide patients, as per its leading position in the Medical Tourism Index 2020-2021 (<https://www.magazine.medicaltourism.com/article/international-patient-department-training-for-success-in-medical-tourism>)

Nowadays, the medical tourism service is becoming one of the most popular sectors among the international population. Since after covid pandemic, Bangkok medical tourism has been expanding, offering widespread services from booking flights, arranging transport and accommodations to appointment booking, discussing management plans and post operative follow ups. Myanmar patients are an important target groups who has become more fascinated by the healthcare services in Bangkok which can provide premium treatment at affordable price.

1.1 Problem Statement

After the COVID-19 pandemic and the happening military coup in Myanmar, the healthcare sector has been severely deteriorated. Lack of medical professions and basic medical supplies has hit the medical field to face with challenges.

As consequences, people from high- and middle-income are seeking best and affordable medical treatment in neighboring countries like Thailand, India. Among these countries, Bangkok is the most preferred choice for Myanmar patients with their similar cultural status, best quality care, cost effective treatment and easily assessable to take treatment in both government and private hospitals. But as for the price sensitive groups, government hospitals are in alternative choice with their low expense. The quality of healthcare services based on patients' perceptions and their treatment experiences. However, the reasons behind Myanmar patients' preference between government and private hospitals in Bangkok remain indefinite.

1.2 Research Questions

What are the reasons for Myanmar patients in choosing between public and private hospitals in Bangkok and causes of their satisfaction?

1.3 Research Objective

- To identify the reason why Myanmar patients choose public hospitals in Bangkok
- To identify the reason why Myanmar patients choose private hospitals in Bangkok
- To explore Myanmar patient's experience and causes of their satisfaction in the service of Government and Private hospitals in Bangkok

1.4 Expected Outcome

Data from this research can support the well understanding of perception of Myanmar Patients' experience journey in government hospital and private hospital. It can explore their concern according to their satisfaction and experience in receiving health care services in the private sector and government sectors. Moreover, the hospital

side in Bangkok can understand more of Myanmar patients feedback on their satisfaction in their experience journey as mutual benefit.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The terms of patient satisfaction and experience in medical tourism are not the same meaning although they are in touch together all the time when data are collected (Satpathy, n.d.2022). As for the patient experience which includes the whole journey from beginning to the end of the treatment by focusing on the overall healthcare quality and services while patients are interacting with healthcare professions such as communication, facility and mentally support (Durmuş & Akbolat, 2020). As for the patient satisfaction which refers to the patient themselves who approve that their treatment outcome is successfully completed which is worth paying with what they get. On the other hand, it means that it is more specific on the patient's expectation and results are in match or more than what they expected (Wolf, n.d. 2023). Different patients can give different satisfaction because of their different expectations and experience.

As the significant growth of the tourism sector of Thailand, popularity of holiday destinations is one part of successful factors of Thailand's medical tourism. In the example of 2014 data, Bangkok is expecting 16 million foreign visitors than other cities in the world. Among them, nearly one million travelers are seeking the best medical healthcare services who are expecting a lot from the experiences of government and private hospitals (Finch, 2014).

2.1 International Hospitals in Bangkok

In the International Hospital, most of the specialists are well trained doctors who received many certifications and diplomas from western countries where medical technologies are well developed Catella, C. (2023). In addition, there are also many reasons, such as quality and price of treatment, their best strategic marketing collaboration with other sectors, western accreditation and freely accessible traveling,

to be the top medical tourism in the world (Fakfare, n.d. 2022). There are many international hospitals such as Bumrungrad, Bangkok, Samitavej, Vejthani which can provide the same service as the luxury hotel in the tourism industry (Hannibal, n.d.2022). Moreover, their locations are easily accessible for the medical travelers and some hospitals are providing free transportation services to the customers for the patient's convenience. Therefore, the medical services in Thailand, especially in Bangkok, can provide the best healthcare services at the same level with international standards. Many international hospitals already have good reviews and their popularity is from word of mouth from the patient's experience.

2.2 Government Hospitals in Bangkok

During the covid situation, the expense of medical supplies are high demand, short supply and rising price making the patients suffer not only in physical health but also the financial status. Therefore, the medical sector standing alone is not the good solution in the pandemic and collaboration between private and government sectors is very important to save the cost and sufficient treatment for the patients (Witvorapong et al., 2022). According to the World Health Organization, in 2004, the government sector had the average healthcare expenditure in total of 65 percent (Supasettaysa, n.d.2023). One of the reasons for choosing the government hospital for Myanmar Patients is the lower cost than private hospitals. Another one is that most government hospitals are doing research centers and government funding provides full support to many Myanmar patients in their treatment journey to be in convenience (Sumriddetchkajorn et al., 2019). There are many popular government hospitals in Bangkok such as Siriraj Hospital and Chulaborn Hospital and they are the affiliation of Mahidol University which is the best university in the medical profession (Faculty of Medicine Siriraj hospital, 2021).

2.3 Myanmar Patients' Experiences and Perceptions

There are a wide range of connections between patients and the healthcare industry such as services from medical professional doctors, nurses, healthcare workers,

hospital staff and so on. Moreover, there will be many factors on the patient convenience of their treatment journey starting from receiving the necessary information, their accommodation arrangement, easily accessible service from hospital, including communication and providing information of appointment and consultation.

When determining the patient's experience, there are seven key factors which are patient well understanding, patient convenience, clinical environment and waiting time, integrative health services, transparency and accurate follow-through (Maddy Crouch, 2021). Patients become users or consumers of health-care services starting with their first. Health-care service is experienced as physically, psychologically, socially and spiritually as the same 4-dimensional sphere of human experience (Oben, 2020). If the healthcare sector has to increase the patient's experience and perception, there may be five principles which have to be followed (Glaser 2021). Firstly, patients are regarded as the customer or client who purchase the medical service (Park et al., 2022). Therefore, the role of experience, perception and the word of mouth are mainly precipitation factor when they are considering taking treatment in Thailand. Secondly, trust on advanced technology can help them to get better treatment outcomes which are less likely to be available in Myanmar (Dhagarra et al., 2020). Thirdly, the patient-centered approach is a very fundamental step which is the needs of each and every Myanmar patient during the whole treatment process (Moon et al., 2023). Fourthly, rapid delivery process of accurate information to each and every patient in time which can prevent delayed investigations, late diagnosis and missed early treatment plans (Adane et al., 2019). As the last, clear explanation to the patient's understanding and wise use of correct medical terms during the discussion to avoid miscommunication and misunderstanding (Paxton, n.d. 2021).

Although the system is following the above key factors and principles, there are some limitations when Myanmar patients are taking treatment in the government and private healthcare sector. As for the patient from the Private healthcare sector, information is easier to get not only directly from the hospital but also from the medical tourism agency. There will be no doubt that the use of medical technology is also an advanced technique, a peaceful, quiet, neat and tidy hospital environment and all are trying to support in one stop service. Especially the difficulties of language barrier are

less chances for the patients where there are many local translators on standby to assist the patient.

On the other hand, in the government healthcare sector, there may be a chance of long waiting time to consult, delay delivery of message processes due to the language barriers, miscommunication and lack of easily accessible hospital services are becoming a disturbance for the Myanmar patients till now.

Focusing on the patients' center approach is the most important factor according to each patient's experience. It can vary into any condition with each patient's need, expectation and their preferences. Moreover, providing service to the patient is not quite easy and not as simple as ordinary care. Healthcare professions are trying to support not only their physical unhealthy status but also their mental development. On the other hand, providing healthcare services with a patient centered approach benefits not only to the patient side, but also to the clinic or hospital side. It can increase their business outcome as well.

Therefore, feedback from the patient's experience and their perception is a very important indicator in the healthcare industry. According to the feedback from them, the whole industry can align with this sector to provide better service and to achieve patient loyalty. Improved reputation increased walk-in patients, high financial status, increased retention of patients and better reviews are good indicators of the clinic or hospital performance according to the patient's experience.

2.4 Patient Satisfaction

Patient satisfaction and expected outcome would be measured after their treatment process is completely finished. Because this is one indicator of patient performance on how they felt, and it can vary from each type of customer satisfaction metric. Like patient experience, patient satisfaction is also a helpful tool to consider whether the quality of healthcare services is really supportive or not. In the satisfaction part, psychological effects from their real situation that they passed will also be included. It can be varied according to their patient's experience during the journey and sometimes it may deteriorate from the treatment outcome which can overwhelm the patient's satisfaction. There are two factors of care which can relate to patient

satisfaction, conditions of care and orientation towards care. Condition of care can be defined as the whole specific process at the clinic or hospital in which patients can get the services of appointment process, customer service, treatment process, hospital stay, payment of method, convenient hospital location which all are included in the questionnaires by community base (Haftom Desta, 2018).

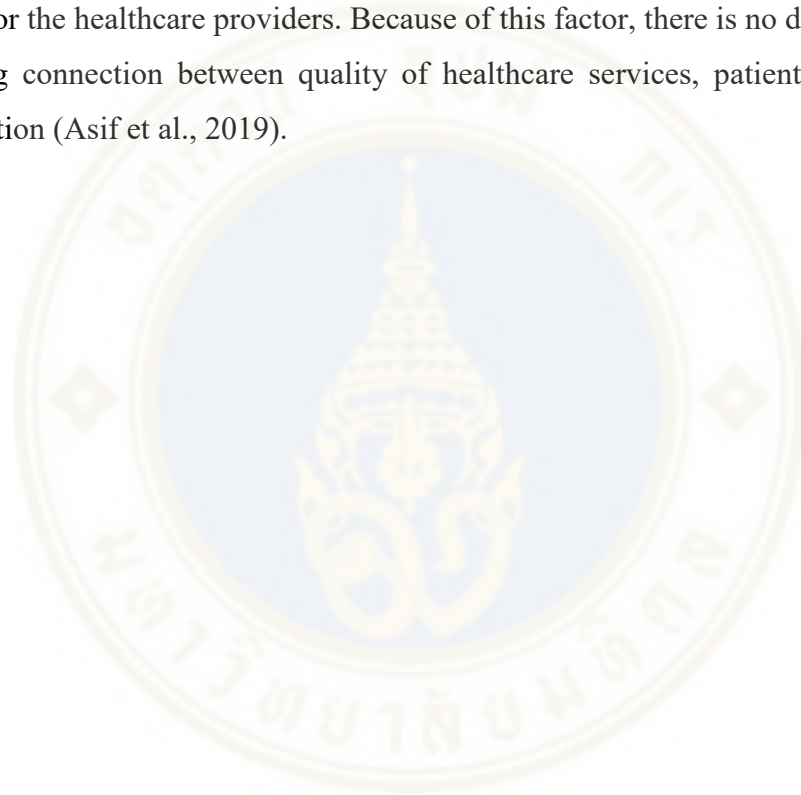
Doctor patient relationship is one of the main leading roles when patient's satisfaction is considered especially for the Myanmar patients. Their culture is based on the person's addiction and many patients are easy to deviate to the side according to word of the mouth and the highest influence of the medical agency and their trusted medical family doctor on their decision on the treatment of choice. Therefore, the role of care provider is also critical in the session of patient satisfaction (Friedel et al., 2023). Catching the heart of patients' expectations is one of the goals for the Myanmar Patient by taking care in a friendly environment and active participation can encourage the patient themselves to be part of the decision maker. Persuasion of the care provider around them is the big impact on them especially when patients are mentally unhealthy status, and the lovely surrounding can help them a lot to motivate their recovery status to be faster such as the cleanliness of the hospital or clinic since patient arrived the hospital and along the pathway of their treatment journey in the hospital (Bolz-Johnson et al., 2020). Even single tiny things can affect their satisfaction performance such as lobby area, restroom, waiting area, less waiting time, etc.

2.5 Quality of Thailand Healthcare services

In the Health Care Index 2019 edition, CEOWorld magazine ranked Thailand as sixth in the healthcare quality among 89 countries. Taiwan ranked first as the best healthcare in ASEAN countries, followed by Japan and South Korea, respectively. Thailand is the only country from Southeast Asia ranked sixth within the top ten. The databases are collecting from the easy availability of medication quality, treatment cost and the quality level of health care professionals.

In the part of quality healthcare, it can be divided into two parts, private sector and government sector. Choice of the healthcare sector can vary from the patient's disease status. Most of the Myanmar patients are seeking medical advice especially

when they are facing and need the secondary care, tertiary care and long-term care where local based hospitals cannot be guaranteed in this harsh situation in the country (Saw et al., 2019). This kind of medical care includes participation of all departments such as executive healthcare, laboratory, radiology, occupational therapy, rehabilitation, nutritional care, prenatal care and so on. Some patients' conditions need more than one service care when they are arriving on site. All these healthcare services are also the influencing factor for the patient experience journey and patient satisfaction. Providing healthcare services to each different type of patient type is not as simple as to handle easily for the healthcare providers. Because of this factor, there is no doubt that there is a strong connection between quality of healthcare services, patient experience and satisfaction (Asif et al., 2019).



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology refers to conducting research and gather data by investigating the problem and information for a specific purpose (Khan et al., 2023). It involves identification, collection and interpreting the data to answer research questions.

3.1 Research design

In this study, exploratory qualitative research is used to understand Myanmar patients' experiences journey between government and private hospital in Bangkok. This design can use in-depth interviews methods which can get more widely information than the survey methods by gathering detailed insights, focusing on their perspective corporation. Moreover, each interviewee can feel more convenient, comfortable while they are answering open-ended type of questions and it makes both interviewer and interviewees to interact easily. This design approach aims to uncover Myanmar Patients' beliefs, perception and emotions related to medical tourism in Bangkok and assess patient satisfaction. According to the answer from the interview, researcher will combine all data and analyze them to support the research purpose.

3.2 Sampling method

In this study, data was collected from 15 interviewees (1 interviewee is one patient or one family member) who already took medical treatment in Bangkok from different Government hospitals and Private Hospitals (Anderson et al., 2021). Moreover, patient selection of the interviews will be two types, consumer experience and customer experience which are defined as follow: A consumer experience is someone's experience who is seeking care or preventative care, not going undergoing an acute episode, and they have an opportunity to choose where they go and customer

experience” where the customer includes patients, their families, and even caregivers (Hung C, 2022).

3.3 Data Collection

Researcher will collect the data from direct face to face interview with patient and their family members at their convenience condition. Time of Interview will be 10-15 minutes and video will be recorded with the consent and if need, note down and voice recording will be part of collecting the data. Apart from this, researcher can arrange for the convenience of the interview by providing the virtual meeting or telephone conversation.

3.4 Interview Questions

When the researcher is collecting the data by asking the questions, there will be two parts. One part will be general information of the patients or family members such as background, age, gender, nationality, education, occupation and location. This part will take around 5 minutes to be completed. In the second part, it will be mainly focused on specific questions which are becoming the supportive data of this research study. This part will take around 10 minutes for each interviewee.

3.5 Research Questions for interview

Topics

A. General Questions (interview identification, age, gender, occupation, type of disease condition, prefer hospital that they usually go, frequency of the hospital visit)

B. Research focus questions

Communication and information sharing

As an communication and information sharing, how do you feel about how doctors, nurses and healthcare staffs share information with you in the hospital?

- What communication channels are used by healthcare providers in each setting and what is your experience on their way of information sharing?

Quality of care and customer service

- Did u take treatment in both private and government hospital before? If yes, what do you think about the care you get in both hospitals and what is their difference?

- Your expected experiences is in match with this service that you get in both hospital? Any examples.

Timeliness of service and Accessibility (waiting time)

- Do you think that process of getting the treatment is easy for u or any difficulties at the hospital?

- When you arrive hospital, is it difficult to get information on site? How about waiting time for appointment or services in the hospital?

Participation of patients' preferences and concerns

- What are the factors that you considered when making decision about treatment at hospital?

Difficulties and challenges

- Are there any problems/issues that you are facing during your medical journey at the hospital? If yes, please explain some examples.

- How did the hospital tackle that problem? Did you satisfy with the way hospital managed that problem and what were your thoughts about it?

Medical expense affordability and financial consideration

- What is your opinion on the costs of treatment at the hospital in Bangkok?

- Does the cost of healthcare in Bangkok cause you any financial burden? Did you encounter any difficulties because of this? How did you tackle that problem?

Satisfaction overall

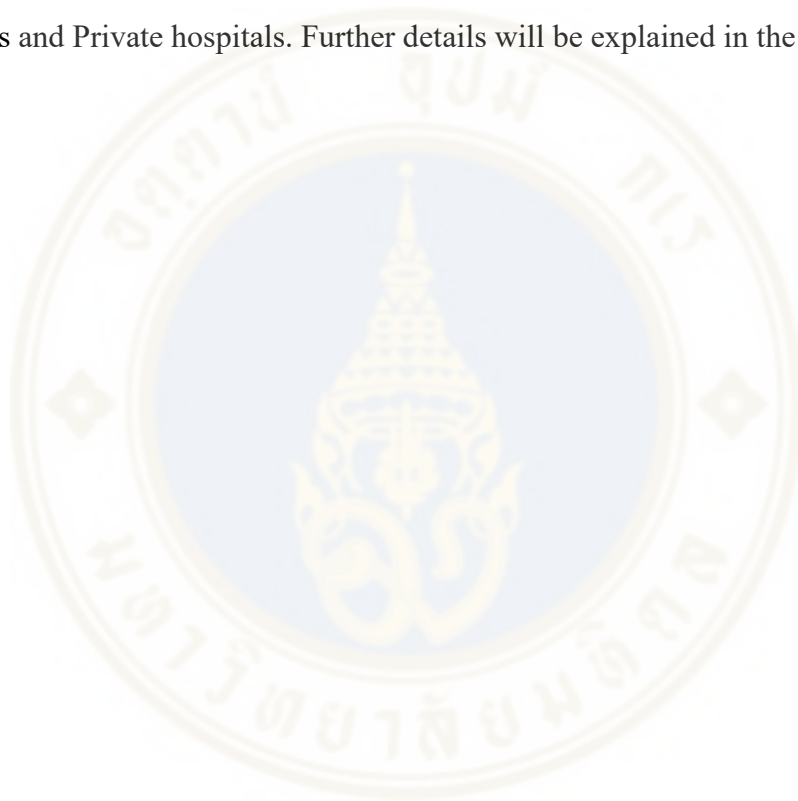
- Do you generally feel satisfied with the care you receive at the hospital in Bangkok? Please explain some examples.

- Do you have any suggestions to help improve the patient's experience at hospitals in Bangkok?

- What suggestions would you like to give to your friends and families who are trying to get treatment at Bangkok Private/Government Hospitals?

3.6 Data Analysis Method

All interviewees are noted as the anonymous coding format such as M1 to M15. According to each interviewee after asking the questions from above, data will be analyzed based on their answer of experiences and satisfaction in both Government hospitals and Private hospitals. Further details will be explained in the next chapter.



CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Interviewees' profile

All interviewees are Myanmar nationality and there were 19 interviewees who was sharing their experiences while taking treatment in government and private hospitals in Bangkok. These 19 interviewees are composed of patients who are seeking medical treatment for their annual check up and other specific disease conditions such as cancer and surgical procedures. The timing of the interview was lasting maximum 15 minutes through in-person, video calling and phone calling due to the patient's convenience request where interview can cover the whole informative questions. Data collection by interviewing period is from March 10, 2024 to March 17, 2024.

Table 4.1 Demographic of interviewees

Interviewees' codes	Gender	Age	Occupation	Disease	Hospital
M1	Male	28	Own Business	Medical Check up	Private
M2	Female	29	Online business	Breast cyst	Private
M3	Male	27	Medical Coordinator	Colon Cancer	Private and Government
M4	Male	65	Dependent	Anaphylaxis	Private
M5	Female	54	Manager	Breast Cancer	Private
M6	Male	53	Business	Knee replacement surgery	Private

Table 4.1 Demographic of interviewees (cont.)

Interviewees' codes	Gender	Age	Occupation	Disease	Hospital
M7	Male	33	Pharmacist	Gastro colonoscopy	Private
M8	Female	29	Journalist	Respiratory tract infection	Private and Government
M9	Female	32	Tour agent	Acute Gastritis	Private
M10	Female	44	Product Manager	SLE	Private
M11	Male	42	Graphic Designer	Gastritis	Private
M12	Male	73	Floral service	High cholesterol	Private
M13	Female	63	Educational Advisor	Brain Tumor	Private and Government
M14	Female	30	Master Student	Tuberculosis	Private
M15	Female	35	Trading consultant	Chronic gastritis	Private
M16	Male	17	Student	Sarcoma	Private and Government
M17	Female	28	Student	Tooth Extraction	Government
M18	Male	57	Merchant	PET CT scan (Prostate cancer)	Government
M19	Male	55	Retired	Radiation (Colon Cancer)	Government

In summary, there were 10 males and 9 females' interviewees. All are Myanmar nationality, and they all are flying to Bangkok for medical treatment. Most interviewees are living in Yangon, Mandalay, Taung gyi, Magway, Pyay, Mawlamyaing, Dawei, Laisho, Myanmar. Most interviewees are starting their treatment at private hospitals, and some are referred from private to government due to their financial problems such as cancer patients. Some of them are flying to Bangkok for their follow up while interviewing.

4.2 Research Findings

In this study, interviewees are well explained about their experiences during their treatment at hospitals in Bangkok in which their satisfactions are also the key factor in the medical tourism as well as healthcare industry. Questionnaires surveys are classified into 7 parts to describe the patients' experience journey from different aspects.

4.2.1 Communication and information sharing

Before flying abroad, getting information is very important steps not only to all travelers but also to the medical travelers too. Especially for medical travelers who need to arrange the medical expenses and visa process which cannot be expected in some conditions as an example patient got infected covid while taking treatment during pandemic period before. At that time, the expense for covid treatment is an extra charge that patient cannot predict the specific amount before they fly. According to the interview, most of the patients are responded that they get fully informative from hospital before they flew. Both private and government hospitals use the most common social media platform to contact patients for sharing information easily such as Viber and Facebook in Myanmar language.

M2 said "hospital staffs pass the informational verbally or by written papers to their person Viber account which Myanmar people widely used."

M3 said "They share details of findings that were explained in terms which were easily understandable by patients."

M5 said "they are sending the required information and documents through email and different social media within few hours and its really quite accessible for us."

M10 said “In my interactions with healthcare providers, communication has occurred through telemedicine platform which has been overwhelmingly positive. This platform helps us a lot while I am doing my passport process in my country, and it didn’t make my treatment plan not to be delay.”

M16 said “Before I flied to Bangkok, my family contacted the medical agent who is referring patient to private and government hospital in Bangkok. As my disease condition needs to take long-term treatment, therefore, finding the right diagnosis without delay time is majority and consulting at private hospital become first choice for me. But right now, I am taking further cancer treatment at the government hospital and all the information and assisted by our agent from Myanmar and I need translator standby beside me. Different with private hospital, language barrier is quite tough for me in government hospital”

M17 said “I got the information from my friends and also the medical assistance agent in Myanmar help me receive all necessary requirements to fly to Bangkok for treatment.”

M18 said “One of my friends from Thailand share all information about the hospital and guide me how to fly to Bangkok to get the treatment.”

4.2.2 Quality of care and customer service

In this part, all of interviewees are choosing the private hospital first before government because of quick response and patient can meet with doctor as early as possible while the disease condition is in urgent. Moreover, the trust on the customer service from private hospital is much better than government hospital by Myanmar people letting most patients to choose private hospital first.

M2 said “At private hospital, I was treated patiently from both nurse and doctor, and I keep continue my treatment at private hospital till now.”

M6 said “Regarding my opinion on the private hospital, most of the service and facilities are good but the cost is expensive and sometimes, it makes me double thinking when there is long-term treatment such as cancer or major operation.”

M10 said “I have only received treatment at a private hospital, and my experience there has fully met my expectations. The care I received was of high quality, characterized by attentive and personalized service.”

M14 said “customer service here are the same as in Myanmar. Private are more welcoming than government. Therefore, sometimes I had to paid much cannot be as an excuse for me while I am choosing hospital.”

M16 said “Customer services from private hospitals are good but sometimes I face that there is lack of care such as nurse didn’t tell where to go next and let us to wait for too long. To be honest, I want to choose private because I can ask anyone who can speak English very well and sometime, I can call interpreters to ask in my mother language.”

M18 said “Customer services are not excellent but still okay, probably because it’s a public hospital so understandable. The staffs, especially doctors and nurses can speak English fluently as well.

M19 said “Myanmar interpreters at the hospital help us with every process at the hospital. So, everything goes very smoothly. I’m satisfied with the hospital services, and I can see medical technologies are very advanced as well.

4.2.3 Timeliness of service and accessibility

This part can describe the understanding of practical aspects when patients are accessing healthcare services at hospitals in Bangkok, such as available of appointment and waiting times, and exploring whether there are significant differences between government and private hospitals in Bangkok from the patients’ perspective. Most respondents are more favorable to take treatment in private hospital due to easily accessible and not too long waiting time compared to government. Moreover, the medical coordinator is readily available for any assistance, whatever they needed at a private hospital.

M3 said “I don’t get enough information for waiting time, hospital admission process and treatment plan may be due to language barriers but there is Myanmar medical coordinator is assisting us to be in smooth process.”

M10 said “Getting medical help before I started treatment was easy for me. From the moment I decided to seek care, I found the process of scheduling an appointment to be straightforward and quick and the convenience of online booking systems which is available at private hospital.”

M14 said “The private hospital was well-organized, with clear signage and a helpful information desk that made accessing information easy. Any questions I had were promptly answered by the staff, who were both knowledgeable and eager to assist.”

M17 said “Since it’s a public hospital, I had to wait for a long time. Without the help of my friend, I don’t think it’ll be easy for me to understand all the process at the hospital.”

4.2.4 Participation of patient’s preferences and concerns

Patients feel that they are listened to, and their opinions are considered when decisions are being made, whether it's about treatment procedures, options, or other aspects and they feel healthcare providers take concerns, and recommendation into account when deciding on treatment plans or medical procedures.

M10 said “The healthcare professionals took the time to understand my concerns and preferences, ensuring that these were central to the decision-making process. During consultations, the doctors presented me with various treatment options, explaining the benefits and potential drawbacks of each. They were attentive to my questions and took care to provide answers in a way that was easy for me to understand, which helped me make informed decisions about my care.”

M14 said “The factors that I consider are the accessibility, language barriers, affordability and the availability of skilled doctors.”

M16 said “I mainly focus on the materials that hospital used, the experience shared by the previous patient and analyze the finding from internet that I search about my treatment. But at the government hospital, I have to rely on my assistance whatever I need to know although the medical devices used in government are latest one”

M17 said “I consider depending on the cost effectiveness and quality of care, including the expertise of doctors and hospitals reputation.”

4.2.5 Difficulties and challenges

Long waiting times for appointments, limited access to necessary medical resources or specialists, communication barriers between patients and healthcare providers due to cultural or language differences, insufficient information provided to patients about their diagnoses and treatment options, and financial burdens associated

with healthcare costs, especially for those without adequate insurance coverage are most of the concern answers from the interviewees.

M2 said “I think, most of the hospitals manage the problems from the google reviews that were written by the patients. This technique is very effective in managing the problems “

M6 said “Sometimes, the hospital doesn’t explain details about the bill and invoice which made us confused. And while waiting to see the doctor, the staffs didn’t inform us how long do we need to wait and didn’t give any information.”

M14 said “There weren’t a lot of issues except money conversion problems because most of Myanmar people pay in cash and its less likely rely on insurance. The hospital was very patient and understanding when we could not pay the bills on time due to money conversion issues. So, we were very satisfied with it.”

M19 said “I didn’t face with any difficulties since Myanmar interpreters at the hospital assist me with all process. But the waiting time was very long and wasted a lot of time for us.

4.2.6 Medical expense affordability and financial consideration

Financial considerations and affordability of healthcare is crucial for patients. This question delves into how patients perceive the costs associated with healthcare services in government hospitals versus private ones. It explores whether patients find the billing process transparent and understandable, and whether they face financial stress due to healthcare expenses, especially for those without sufficient insurance coverage.

M3 said “At Emergency Department, staff explained me about estimated cost for hospital stay but final total bill after discharge is much higher than estimated cost. It makes burden to most of Myanmar people.”

M10 said “Before undergoing any treatment or tests, the hospital staff provided detailed explanations of the costs involved, ensuring there were no surprises. The billing department took the time to break down the charges for me, item by item, which helped me understand exactly what I was paying for. This level of detail and openness in communication was reassuring, especially when dealing with the stress of medical treatment. It allowed me to make informed decisions about my care, based on

a clear understanding of the financial implications. Prior to any treatment, I actively engaged with the hospital's billing department to obtain a clear estimate of the costs involved. This transparency allowed me to make informed decisions about my care, weighing the benefits of certain procedures against their costs.”

M16 said “If a patient is affordable, it’s better choice to take treatment at private hospital. Because at the government hospital, we cannot take any investigation that we are concerned about. Moreover, we have to meet with general practitioners only and it takes time a lot to consult with specialists especially waiting time for 2-6 weeks.”

M18 said “The cost is reasonable with the treatment we received at the hospital. But waiting time and services are not that great compared to the private hospital.

4.2.7 Satisfaction overall

Quality of care, communication convenience, accessibility, and affordability are the factors which contribute to each interviewee’s satisfaction. Additionally, it can reflect whether patients would recommend one type of hospital over the other based on their experiences and the reasons behind their recommendations in their interview.

M1 said “Yes, I feel satisfied, and I think it was worth spending money on health care services from Bangkok. I recommend a private hospital. Because of their hospitality, good communication between doctors and patients, very informative results etc.”

M9 said “I generally feel very satisfied with the care I receive at the private hospital in Bangkok. The hospital is equipped with modern medical technology and facilities, which enhances the quality of care. Clean, comfortable environment contribute to a more pleasant healthcare experience, making it easier to undergo my treatment and recover.”

M10 said “One of the most appreciable aspects of private hospitals is the efficiency of service, including significantly shorter waiting times for appointments and procedures. Beyond medical treatment, private hospitals offer a range of support services, such as insurance coordination and financial counseling.”

M14 said “Overall, I felt very satisfied with the care. The staff were very supportive, helpful, and patient. It would be better if patients can have better waiting time at government hospitals. For the private hospitals, it would be great if we could have a better price. I will suggest other to go private hospitals if they want to get the treatment quickly but if patients have time and not much money, I recommend them to go government hospitals only.”

M19 said “I’m satisfied with the overall services from the hospital. Because I underwent long treatment for my illness so receiving it at the government saved a lot of cost for us too.”



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This research aims to (1) identify the reasons why Myanmar patients choose public or private hospitals in Bangkok and (2) explore Myanmar patients' experience and causes of their satisfaction in the service of Government and Private hospitals in Bangkok.

The conclusion will be divided into 2 parts according to the findings from the respondents in chapter 4 as follows;

Part I Myanmar Patients' Experiences at Private Hospitals in Bangkok

Part II Myanmar Patients' Experiences at Government Hospitals in Bangkok

5.1.1 Patients' Experiences at Private Hospitals in Bangkok

According to analysis, most patient are convenient with the service at the private hospital because of the convenience of getting information before they fly abroad to take treatment such as easily assessable in the social media from each private hospital facebook page, youtube, viber, telegram, etc. Moreover, the availability of the local interpreters in private hospital is another strong point of getting attention by the Myanmar patients. As another strong point, when the patient has some difficulties to fly Bangkok, private hospital can arrange the telemedicine process with patient to get the early treatment plan while they are waiting in Myanmar (Aung, n.d.). But due to the high cost, most people who can afford for the short-term treatment are willing to take treatment at Private hospital. Major disease conditions which Myanmar patient are going Private hospital for their treatment are gastro-colonoscopy, knee replacement surgery, high cholesterol case and gastritis.

5.1.2 Patients' Experiences at Government Hospitals in Bangkok

According to the Government hospital's experience analysis, choosing the treatment at government hospital are not the first choice of most Myanmar patient. Most are willing to go and take treatment of their long-term disease condition or some people who cannot afford the major procedure cost of private hospital. Another concern is that difficulty of getting information from government hospital and long waiting time is one of the disturbances between choosing private and government hospital. Moreover, lack of local translators and lack of language proficiency is also making burden to the Myanmar patient beyond their health concern.

5.2 Recommendation

This research can cover part of Myanmar patient journey according to their experience at Private and Government hospital in Bangkok. As the result, it can reflect the gain point and pain point of their satisfaction during treatment in Bangkok and this can help both private and government hospital to improve their services in the medical tourism of healthcare industry. The researcher would like to recommend not only to hospital but also to patient for recommendation to their family and friend by revisiting in their follow up.

5.2.1 Services at Private Hospital

First of all, regarding the service providing, there is no doubt that most private hospital are trying to give the best service among their competitors especially after post-covid period. But at the same time, increase walking in patient for seeking treatment in Bangkok after pandemic and coup in Myanmar (Myint, G.T. and M. (2021)) which is much more significant and it can affect to their manpower when they provide the service such as some interviewees mention that there was unclear and confused bill at cashier, uncomfortable for long waiting time although doctor is ready because of lacking translators. In this moment, some patients cannot feel that the service they got are worth paying with what they gave. Since the Myanmar patients are expecting a lot on the quality care and service of private hospital even before they fly to Bangkok, Thailand. The recruitment of expert specialist for advance treatment, healthcare staff

and healthcare providers should be carefully supervised for the better outcome in the healthcare industry.

5.2.2 Services at Government Hospital

For the government hospital, Myanmar patient already understood that there are many protocols in government due to governmental related process and even hospital is mostly full of local patients because of the affordable cost of treatment provided by government in some sectors. But after covid, the healthcare needs of foreigner in which Myanmar patients are one of them and also growing medical tourism of hospital in Bangkok, government hospital should try to provide the service for foreigner as well. As an result, giving treatment to diverse patient populations can help local medical students, doctors and specialist to achieve different experience and conduct research for wide scope of disease. Moreover, some government hospitals may receive financial support from international organization or government to provide care to expat or foreigners. In this step, there should be international languages in their website to get information easily. Although government hospital cannot communicate to specific social platform of each nationality, they should be updated their website, emailing and call centers composed of staff who has good language proficiency in communication. Moreover, the waiting time pathway of government hospital should be changed with alternative solutions such as fast tract or foreigner pathway with specific charge compared with local people or can arrange separate pathway collaboration with different government sector according to patient data of which nationalities are most taking treatment at government. As an extra point, promoting their activities not only in local language but also in international language to reach more patients by making good reputation.

5.3 Limitation

Due to the usage of qualitative method and time limitation of interview questions which cannot cover full aspect of variation in the interview. Although researcher interview with various age level of interviewees, most of the respondents went private hospital first which makes the lack of interviewee from government

hospital aspects because of difficult accessibility of information from government hospital to take treatment within short period. Therefore, most data in this research are based on popularity of private and government hospitals in Bangkok for Myanmar patients and there may have some variations from other perspective since the research does not cover for all hospitals in Bangkok (Aye, n.d.).

5.4 Future Research

This is the semi-structure qualitative research of studying Myanmar patients' experience journey between government and private hospital in Bangkok. If there are more chances for further study to gain more information and specific data about this issue, I would like to recommend as follow;

In this thematic paper, the researcher mostly focusses on the Myanmar Patients' who are flying from Myanmar to Bangkok for their treatment. The researcher should expand not only to travelers but also the Myanmar Expats living in other provinces of Thailand. Although Myanmar expatriates and Myanmar travelers are different in initial, but both areas of study can share overlapping common themes such as healthcare accessibility and quality of services when Myanmar nationality is taking treatment in Bangkok.

In this research, the researcher used the qualitative method by only interviewing the Myanmar Patients' experience journey which can be varied according to their mood while answering the interview. If researcher can provide some questionnaire or survey method to be more precise which can scope the specific information of patients' experience.

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