

Qualitative Exploration Of Men's Opinion On The Features Of Male-friendly Primary Health Services In Kelantan, Malaysia



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Introduction

Despite the advancement of the population's health, men's health still lags as evidenced by shorter life expectancy and higher morbidity and mortality compared to women[1]. A poor understanding of men's needs and demands for health services is a factor that can lead to poor men's engagement with primary health services and subsequently can negatively influence men's health.

Objective

This study aims to explore men's opinions on the features of male-friendly primary health services in Kelantan, Malaysia.

Method

A qualitative study using in-depth interviews was conducted among 15 men from six primary health clinics in Kelantan, Malaysia. The participants were selected using a maximum variation sampling method. An interview guide was used, and the interviews were audio-recorded. The finding was transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis techniques.

Result

Table 1: Characteristics of the participants (n =15)

Variable		Total (n = 15)
Age (years)	Young adult (18–35)	1
	Adult (36–55)	7
	Senior (56 and above)	7
Ethnic group	Malay	13
	Chinese	1
	Indian	1
Marital status	Married	13
	Widower/divorced	1
	Single	1
Education level	Primary	1
	Secondary	6
	Tertiary	8
Employment status	Government employee	3
	Private sector worker	7
	Unemployed/pensioner	5
Household income	<RM 4850	9
	RM 4850–RM 10,959	5
	RM 10,960 and above	1
Chronic medical illness	No known medical illness	4
	Single medical illness	6
	Multiple medical illnesses	5

Table 2: The themes and codes identified from the thematic analysis

Themes	Codes
Meeting the men's needs in primary health services	Efficiency
	Clear motto
	Monitoring
	Appropriate waiting time
	Extension of services time
	General health services for men
	Emergency services
Men's sexual health services	
Approaching men through effective health promotion strategies	Content
	Location
	Styles
	Approaches
	Internet and social media
Standards of a healthcare provider	Acknowledgement
	Local men's community
	Dedication
	Admirable attitudes
	Good knowledge
A comfortable physical environment for men	Professional work practice
	Preference of male healthcare provider
	Older and experienced healthcare worker
	Cheerfulness
	Placement of health support services
A comfortable physical environment for men	Comfortable waiting area
	Men-only waiting area
	Privacy-protected and comfortable consultation room
	Specific men's sexual health services setting
	Visitor-friendly amenities

Quotes from the participants:

"Men want fast services, that is the most important [aspect] for men."

R5, 60 years old, retiree

"Support for those without illness to come to the clinic to have health assessment [or screening]... now, if possible, young men also need to go to [the] clinic."

R12, 57 years old, government servant

"Men do not like harsh approaches [in health promotion or education], the message to be conveyed must not use harsh words or language... if you use harsh language, they will not be interested [in joining health activities] as they have their ego."

R9, 70 years old, pensioner

"I think, if common diseases like cough, runny nose, there is no problem if [men see a] female doctor. But if, for example, to get treatment for men's problem or problem-related to genitalia, itchiness, or other [complaint], may feel shy to discuss [the problem] with a female doctor."

R1, 39 years old, government servant

"The first thing is that [they] need to update the community, as nowadays people are more on the internet and use more social media, so the clinic should update the community. It needs to have its own social media account, so that it is easier for people to refer and see [the available programs and activities] and if they have any inquiries [they can reach the healthcare providers]."

R3, 31 years old, technician

"The room [for sexual health services] should be a specific room that can ensure the privacy of the patients so that they can express their sexual health problem without feeling shy."

R1, 39 years old, government servant

"Need to have a male-only waiting area... in a mixed waiting area, the majority who get sit are women... men usually need to stand or wait outside, we feel uncomfortable [while waiting]."

R4, 45 years old, store assistant

Discussion

Creating a more patient-centered healthcare system that provides excellent responsiveness to patients' needs, expectations, and preferences has become the main agenda for improving the provision of health services in recent decades [2]. The participants view that health services should be efficient by providing short waiting times and high-quality services, including men's health services. In addition, the health promotion approaches and styles should consider local men's culture and interests and be appropriately implemented. Besides that, they expected a standard of healthcare provider's characteristics, including commitment to work, admirable attitudes and behavior, and professional work practices. The participants also expected the health clinics to have a comfortable environment to wait, discuss with the doctors, and be equipped with visitor-friendly amenities.

Conclusion

Understanding the men's opinions on the features of male-friendly primary health services would give clear and accurate information about their needs and demands in relation to this service. In addition, the identified themes and features may guide the improvement of the services and men's engagement in the future.

References

1. Ministry of Health Malaysia. *National Men's Health Plan of Action Malaysia 2018–2023*; Ministry of Health Malaysia: Putrajaya, Malaysia, 2018 (accessed on 17 November 2020).
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