

Effectiveness of establishing seasonal medical centers designated to meet the health needs of pilgrims and Umrah performers (Prince Sultan Armed Forces Hospital initiative in Medina as a model)

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of establishing a dedicated healthcare facility to address the health needs of pilgrims during the pilgrimage seasons. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The qualitative phase involves interviews with healthcare professionals, religious authorities, and pilgrimage organizers to gather insights into the specific healthcare requirements of pilgrims.

Additionally, focus group discussions with pilgrims provide valuable perspectives on their healthcare experiences and expectations. Based on the qualitative findings, a comprehensive framework for a Seasonal Medical Center is developed, encompassing key components such as infrastructure, staffing, medical services, logistics, and collaboration with local healthcare providers and authorities .

The survey data provides insights into pilgrims' perceptions (6247) of the healthcare services available during their pilgrimage, including accessibility, quality, and satisfaction levels. It also investigates the impact of the proposed Seasonal Medical Center on pilgrims' overall health and well-being, as well as the effectiveness of preventative measures implemented.

The research findings highlight the significance of establishing a Seasonal Medical Center, emphasizing the potential benefits of improved healthcare access, enhanced disease surveillance, and timely emergency response. The study also underscores the importance of collaboration between healthcare providers, religious authorities, and local stakeholders to implement and manage the Seasonal Medical Center effectively. The research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering insights into the design and implementation of a dedicated healthcare facility for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. The findings can inform policymakers, healthcare professionals, and pilgrimage organizers in developing strategies to address the unique healthcare challenges associated with these annual pilgrimages.

Keywords: Seasonal Medical Center, Hajj, Umrah, pilgrimage, healthcare, infectious diseases, accessibility, collaboration.

1. Introduction:

The Ministry of Health in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia pays excellent attention to providing high-quality health services to pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims while performing Hajj and Umrah rituals. The Ministry works together with the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage and other health authorities to ensure the availability of comprehensive and integrated health care for visitors. Health services provided by the Ministry of Health to pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims include hospitals and health facilities, as well-equipped hospitals and health centers are available in Makkah Al-Mukaromah, Medina, and the Holy Sites. These facilities are equipped with the latest medical technology and equipment to meet the treatment and health care needs of pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims.

In addition to emergency medical services, the Ministry of Health provides emergency medical services in the holy sites and Hajj areas to deal with emergency cases and provide immediate care to pilgrims and Umrah performers. (Editorial Board, 2021).

These services include ambulance, cardiorespiratory resuscitation, initial treatment, and medical transportation. And specialized health care, where specialized health care services are available to pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims in various fields, such as internal medicine, heart surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, dentistry, and others. Qualified and experienced medical teams provide these services. Last but not least, health and awareness campaigns: The Ministry of Health organizes health campaigns and awareness programs for pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims, including awareness of infectious diseases and their prevention, general health advice, personal health and hygiene, and health safety measures in Mecca, Medina, and the Holy Sites.

The Ministry of Health in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia aims to ensure comprehensive and safe health care for pilgrims and Umrah performers by providing the necessary infrastructure, well-equipped medical facilities, and qualified and specialized medical teams. The Ministry cooperates with other entities to ensure coordination of efforts and achieve the highest levels of health care for pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims during the Hajj and Umrah periods. (Binsawad, & Albahar, 2022).

Entities participating in the initiative.

Supervising authority/initiator (Prince Sultan Armed Forces Hospital in Medina)

The General Administration of Health Services at the Ministry of Defense ‘the Ministry of Health ‘the General Presidency for the Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques ‘the Red Crescent ‘the Ministry of Interior ‘and the Ministry of Human Resources.

Initiative idea:

- The number of pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims increased significantly after the Corona pandemic, given that during the university period, pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims were surrounded to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 virus as a precautionary measure.
- The number of pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims reached 2 million.
- As the numbers increased, it was noted that there was a shortage of healthcare services provided to pilgrims, and from here, the idea of the initiative began. (Prince Sultan Armed Forces Hospital reports for the year 1445).

Initiative:

Establishing a comprehensive seasonal medical center covering an area of 2500 square meters, equipped with the latest health facilities and services.

The main goal:

We are providing complete medical care, reducing the occupancy of central hospitals, and reducing the burden on the health sectors while maintaining the satisfaction of the beneficiaries.

Medical services provided by the seasonal center (the initiative):

- Providing integrated medical care
- natural therapy
- health education
- Heat stress

The health service is provided based on quality standards, patient safety, and infection control requirements.

Final Result:

78,083 Hajj and Umrah pilgrims were treated in the initiative out of 272,697 Hajj and Umrah pilgrims who were treated in all other hospitals, meaning 29% of the total number of patients were treated. (Prince Sultan Armed Forces Hospital reports for the year 1445).

This initiative was characterized by several advantages and innovations, the most important of which are:

- Providing an integrated health service for pilgrims and Umrah performers within the courtyards of the Holy Mosque.
- Preparing the seasonal center in a standard period not exceeding 30 days.
- Using the latest medical technologies and devices to examine respiratory conditions, pharmaceutical care, and laboratory tests to ensure quality service and reduce the risk of medical errors.
- The center is distinguished by its comprehensiveness in the services it provides. It is not just a center that provides quick tests but rather an integrated and comprehensive service for the patient from the moment he arrives until the moment he leaves.

- Focus on health safety and infection control by adhering to the latest health prevention and safety policies to maintain a healthy and safe environment for visitors to the Prophet's Mosque.
- Preparing precise plans and assumptions to ensure the correct provision of services and enhancing safety and health infrastructure, in addition to specifying particular paths to be used during the transport of patients in emergencies. (Prince Sultan Armed Forces Hospital reports for the year 1445).

Effectiveness of implementing and implementing the initiative:

The effectiveness of its implementation characterized the initiative, as the set goals were achieved in a record time of no more than 30 days. The initiative contributed to providing distinguished health services and enhancing the safety of pilgrims. Umrah pilgrims went through a set of procedures, as subcommittees were formed within the Supreme Committee to ensure the distribution of responsibilities for various aspects. The project depended on the timeline that was approved, submitting evaluation reports, and following up on the decisions issued by the committees, in addition to establishing organizational structures and enhancing cooperation and joint work between all concerned parties through weekly meetings and periodic reports to ensure continuity of project implementation and continuously discussing challenges to address them and achieve the goals effectively. In addition, the construction maps for the site were designed from scratch early to ensure the project's completion on time while maintaining the concepts of quality management at the center to ensure the provision of services at the highest level.

From a technical standpoint, a unique electronic application has been developed for seasonal medical center data to facilitate and speed up the registration of visitors while preserving the data. (Prince Sultan Armed Forces Hospital reports for the year 1445).

Impactful results of the initiative:

Data was collected from the center's internal electronic application (the initiative) to be analyzed using performance indicators and analysis, issuing periodic reports, studying the gaps, and working on them by following up on performance indicators divided into measuring results and sustainability.

Results and discussion:

This initiative achieved its goals by measuring the results, which is to reduce the burden on other health sectors, as the number of beneficiaries during the entire period of the initiative was 78,083 recoveries, representing 29% of the total health care recipients in Medina. In addition, the beneficiary satisfaction rate was maintained, as the beneficiary satisfaction rate with the health services provided was 95%, according to the results of the Likert-type questionnaire used in several languages, including (Arabic, English, and Urdu). It was distributed to 6,247 randomly, and the remaining 5% were analyzed for the following reasons:

Table (1): illustrating the results of a survey distributed in multiple languages and randomly.

No.	Aspects of the questionnaire	Satisfied	neutral	not satisfied
1	Nursing services	5716	454	77
2	Coordination services	6005	179	63
3	Pharmacy services	5912	81	254
4	Access to the site	6201	46	0
5	Communication and translation	4576	159	1512
6	Services in general	6223	9	15

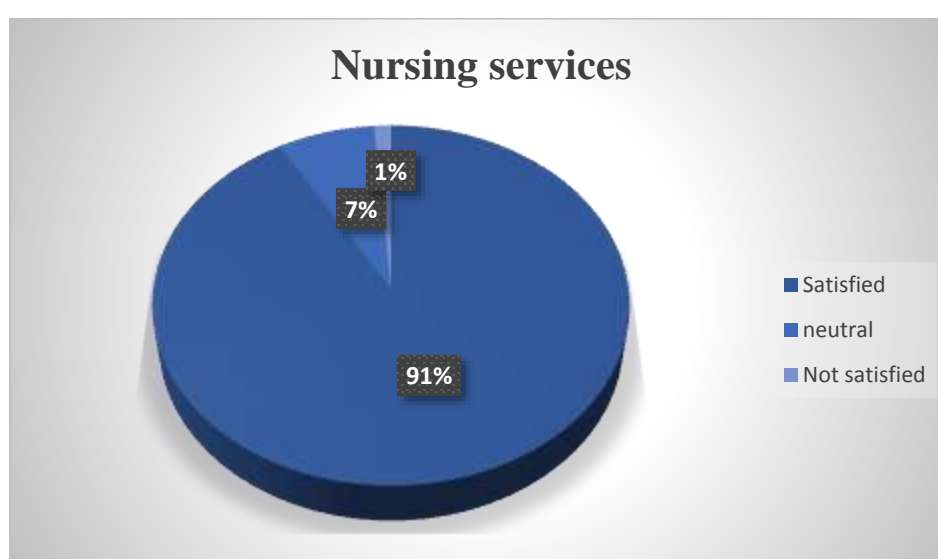


Figure (1): The chart illustrating the evaluation of pilgrims and Umrah performers regarding nursing services.

Regarding the nursing services provided, according to the opinion poll, we find that 5,716 pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims are completely satisfied with the service, which is a number that represents (91%) of the total number. In comparison, 454 pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims expressed their neutrality towards the nursing services provided to them, which is a number that represents (7%) of the total number that they received. While 77 Hajj and Umrah pilgrims expressed dissatisfaction with the nursing services they received, a number representing (1%) of the total number of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims.

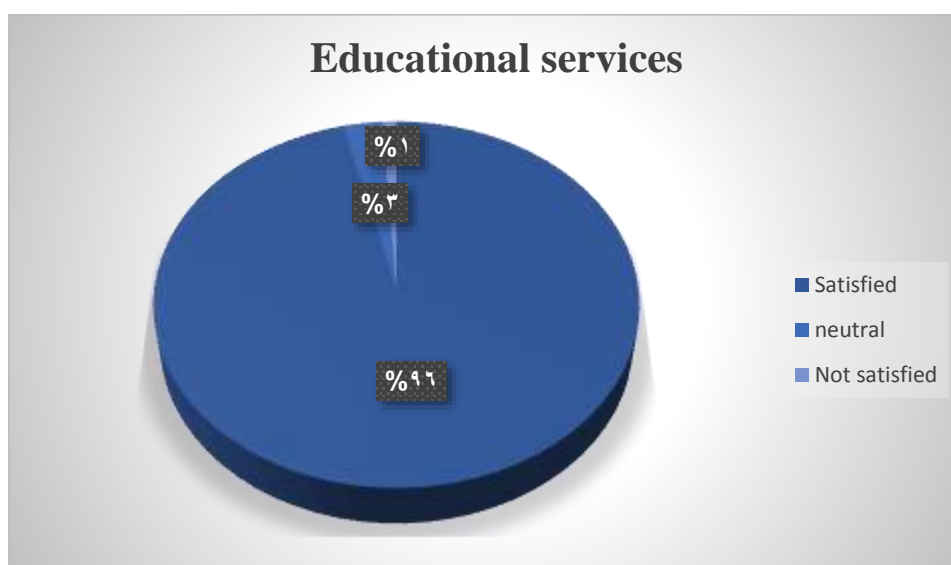


Figure (2): The chart illustrating the evaluation of pilgrims and Umrah performers regarding educational services.

Regarding the educational services provided, according to the opinion poll, we find that 6,005 pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims are completely satisfied with the service, which is a number that represents (96%) of the total number. In comparison, 179 pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims expressed their neutrality towards the educational services provided to them, which is a number that represents (3%) of the total number that they received. 63 Hajj and Umrah pilgrims expressed dissatisfaction with the educational services they received, representing (1%) of the total number of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims.



Figure (3): The chart illustrating the evaluation of pilgrims and Umrah performers regarding pharmacy services.

Regarding the pharmacy services provided, according to the opinion poll, we find that 5,912 pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims are completely satisfied with the service, which is a number that represents (95%) of the total number. In comparison, 81 pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims expressed their neutrality towards the pharmacy services provided to them, which is a number that represents (1%) of the total number that they received. While 254 Hajj and Umrah pilgrims expressed dissatisfaction with the pharmacy services they received, meaning (4%) of the total number of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims.

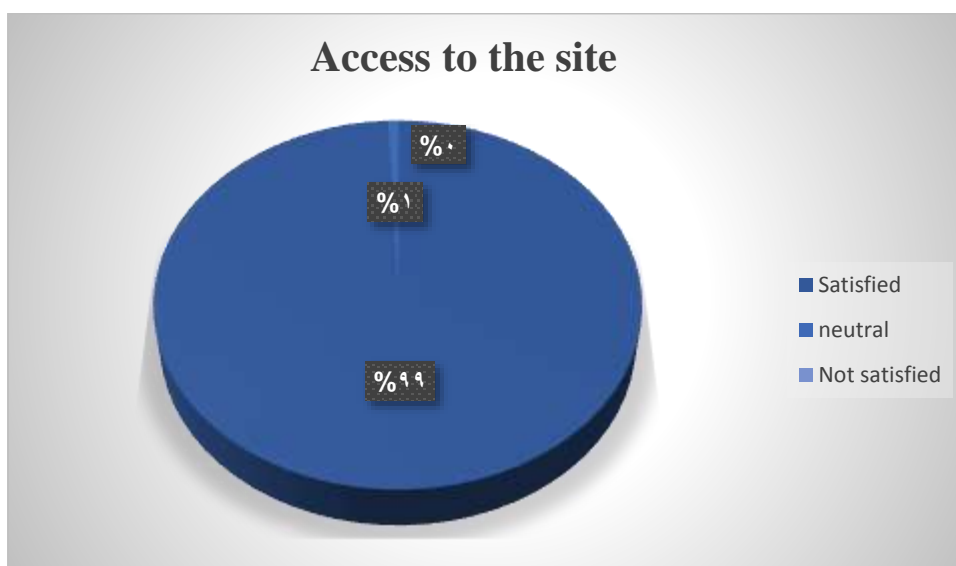


Figure (4): The chart illustrating the evaluation of pilgrims and Umrah performers regarding access to the site services.

Regarding access to the site, according to the opinion poll, 6,201 pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims are completely satisfied with the service, which is a number that represents 99% of the total number. In comparison, 47 pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims expressed their neutrality regarding their ability to access the site, which is a number that represents 1% of the total number that received services, while 0 pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims expressed their dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction with their ability to reach the site, which is a number that represents 0% of the total number of pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims.

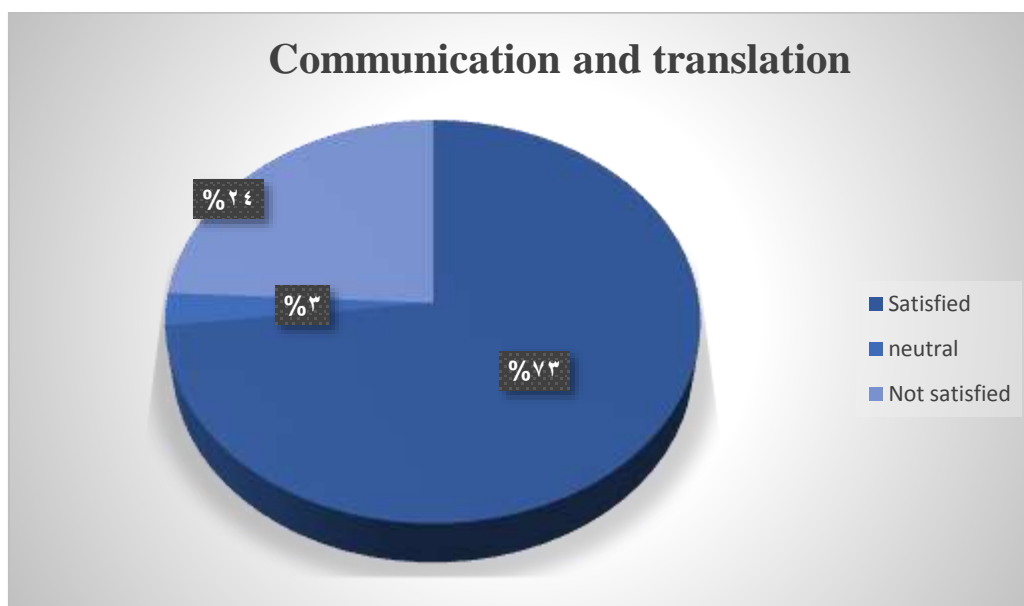


Figure (5): The chart illustrating the evaluation of pilgrims and Umrah performers regarding communication and translation services.

Regarding the communication and translation services provided, according to the opinion poll, we find 4,576 pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims completely satisfied with the service, which is a number that represents 73% of the total number. In comparison, 159 Umrah pilgrims expressed neutrality regarding the communication and translation services, representing 3% of the total. Who received the services, while 1,512 Hajj and Umrah pilgrims expressed their dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction with the communication and translation services they received, a number representing 24% of the total number of pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims.

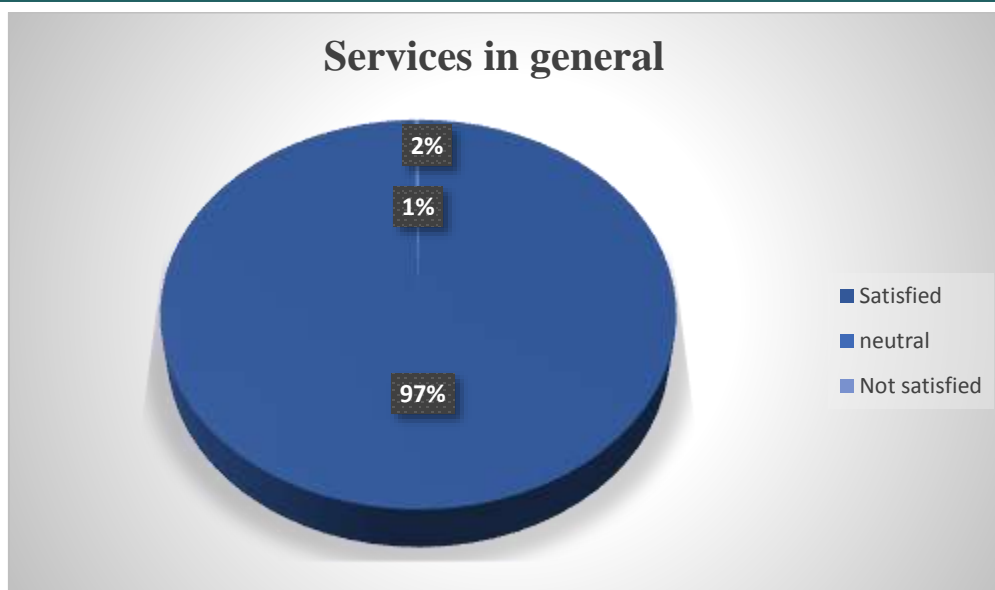


Figure (6): The chart illustrating the evaluation of pilgrims and Umrah performers regarding services in general.

As for the services in general provided, according to the opinion poll, we find 6,223 pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims completely satisfied with the service, which is a number that represents 97% of the total number, while nine pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims expressed their neutrality regarding the communication and translation services provided to them, which is a number that represents 1% of the total number that they offered. He received the services, while 15 Hajj and Umrah pilgrims expressed their dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction with the communication and translation services they received, which is a number that represents 2% of the total number of pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims. (Prince Sultan Armed Forces Hospital reports for the year 1445).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, improving the services of seasonal centers that serve health services for Umrah pilgrims and pilgrims is extremely important. This requires focusing on several aspects such as recruitment and specialized training, health education, translation services, effective communication, improving waiting time, establishing an effective communication and follow-up system, providing comfort and care, cooperating with external parties, and continuous evaluation and quality improvement.

By implementing these recommendations, the experience of Umrah pilgrims and pilgrims can be enhanced, and the quality of health care they receive can be improved. Seasonal centers must be

committed to achieving the best practices and standards in providing health services and must continuously work to develop and improve their performance. Umrah pilgrims and pilgrims come from different cultures and languages, so services must be multilingual and compatible with their specific health needs. Information and directions should be available in multiple languages, and effective translation services should ensure smooth communication between patients and the medical team. In this way, seasonal centers can effectively improve the health and well-being of Umrah pilgrims and provide them with a healthy, safe, and supportive environment. By continuing to work on improving services, these centers can become a model for distinguished and innovative healthcare in this context.

Recommendations:

1. Seasonal centers must ensure the employment of qualified nurses who are well-trained in dealing with Umrah pilgrims and pilgrims.
2. They should know the unique health needs of Umrah pilgrims and pilgrims and be aware of sound health practices in this context.
3. Employees should also receive continuous training to improve their skills and knowledge.
4. Seasonal centers must provide Umrah pilgrims and pilgrims health education services.
5. Awareness workshops and lectures on health, infectious disease prevention, and public health can be organized.
6. Seasonal centers should provide multilingual translation services for Umrah pilgrims and pilgrims.
7. Professional translators who are fluent in the main languages of Umrah pilgrims and pilgrims can be employed to provide effective communication between patients and the medical team.
8. Medical guidance and health information should be available in multiple languages and easy for everyone to understand.
9. Improving waiting time is crucial to improving the experience of Umrah pilgrims and pilgrims.
10. Technology such as mobile applications For example, technology such as mobile applications can be used to communicate between patients and the medical team, providing necessary information and alerts about appointments and deadlines.

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