

Are 999 Callers Rude: a pilot survey at MERS 999 Call Centre

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Introduction

The 999 Medical Emergency Call Centre (MECC) deals with callers from all kinds of backgrounds. In handling the calls, there were rude callers but the proportion of these were never surveyed in the past. Therefore, we decided to executed a pilot survey to factually describe the situation of rude callers in our centre.

Methodology

A survey was done consecutively over 150 calls that came into Hospital Kuala Lumpur's 999 MECC. Call takers were asked to rate the callers based on their perception on a scale 1 to 5; 1 for very polite, 2 for polite, 3 for neutral (neither polite nor rude), 4 for rude (impolite or disrespectful), and 5 for very rude (insults or shouting). Prior to the survey implementation, call takers were briefed in terms of rudeness. The proportion of the categories were then analysed in a descriptive manner.

Results

From the survey conducted on 150 calls, there were 8 drop calls and excluded from the study, making the samples to be 142. 65.49 % (N=93) of the callers were males, whereas 34.51% (N=49) were females. We discovered that 12.68% (N=18) were very polite. 32.39% (N=46) were polite. 4.23% (N=6) were rude. 7.75%(N=11) were very rude. 42.96% (N=61) were neither rude nor polite.

Discussion

Rude and very rude callers made up 11.98% of the total callers. Despite this being a minority of calls, they were still significant and could affect the morale of call takers. Rude and verbal aggressiveness are examples of psychosocial hazards in occupation. Studies show that employees who are frequently exposed to rude or verbally aggressive clients can undermine the employees' well-being, job performance, as well as quality of service provided. There is currently no available rudeness's scale in the literature and this is the first pilot study that conducted in Malaysia.

Conclusion

Public education to have respectful calls when making emergency calls should be in place. Call takers need to be given the skills in handling rude callers as well as psychological support so that they would not be affected emotionally when handling such calls.

Keywords

Rude, 999 Callers, emergency