

Preparation of core questionnaire for inpatient survey 2004

1 Introduction

The acute trust inpatient survey was carried out in 176 acute and specialist hospital trusts in England in 2002. The average response rate was 64%. This was the first trust-based survey to be carried out by all English acute NHS trusts. The survey results were used locally in quality improvement programmes and in the 2002 performance indicators and star ratings. This document describes some of the alterations that have been made to the core questionnaire in order to prepare for the 2003/04 survey.

2 Aims

The aims of this exercise are:

- Where possible, to keep the same questions as were included in the 2002 questionnaire. This will facilitate year-on-year comparisons.
- To remove some questions from the core questionnaire which were not useful for performance indicators or quality improvement purposes. Any questions that are removed from the core questionnaire will be retained for optional use in the question bank.
- To include some questions that were omitted from the 2002 core questionnaire, but which are known to be of high importance to patients, or which have been found to be good predictors of overall rating of quality of care.
- To ensure that the questions are in line with current policy.

3 Evidence used for this work

The following data and studies were referred to in assessing which amendments to make.

- The full dataset for the core questionnaire used in 176 trusts in 2002.
- Picker Institute Europe carried out the surveys for 78 of the trusts and, in most cases, the trusts chose to use an extended 12-page questionnaire, rather than the standard 8-page core questionnaire. Therefore, it has been possible to analyse some of the questions that were omitted from the core questionnaire in 2002 to see if they should be included in the 2003/04 core questionnaire.
- The inclusion of questions in the 2002 performance indicators was taken into account.
- The inpatient importance study carried out in 2001, in which recent inpatients were asked to rate 30 issues in order of importance to them.
- Further analyses examining which of the evaluative questions in the 12-page questionnaire correlated most highly with the overall rating of the quality of care.

4 Non-Performance Indicator (PI) questions removed from the core questionnaire

A number of questions which were not included in performance indicators in the 2002 survey, and which were not found to be very useful for quality improvement purposes have been removed. In this section, unless otherwise stated, question numbers refer to the 2002 questionnaire.

3. While you were in Accident and Emergency, did you get enough information about your medical condition and treatment?

This question was removed because:

- It was not used in PIs in 2002 survey.
- It was covered by the more general question that has now been inserted in the 2004 questionnaire:

25. How much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?

- It is difficult to fit the 2002 question into any of the five Department of Health dimensions.

* * *

5. Were you waiting in a cubicle/corridor/open plan area, etc?

This question was removed because:

- It was not very important to patients
- It was difficult to evaluate
- It was not used in PIs in 2002 survey.

* * *

6. Were you waiting on a trolley/bed/chair, etc?

This question was removed because:

- It was not very important to patients
- It was difficult to evaluate
- It was not used in PIs in 2002 survey.

* * *

12. How many wards did you stay in?

This question was removed because:

- It was not very important to patients.
- It was difficult to evaluate, as different situations are appropriate for different patients.
- It was not used in PIs in 2002 survey.

* * *

13. Were you in a room by yourself/with others/open plan ward?

This question was removed because:

- It was not very important to patients
- It was difficult to evaluate, as different situations are appropriate for different patients
- It was not used in PIs in 2002 survey.

* * *

35. Were you asked your name and address too often?

This question was removed because:

- It was not very important to patients
- It was not used in PIs in 2002 survey.

* * *

45. Did hospital staff discuss with you whether you would need any health or social care services after leaving hospital?

This question was removed because:

- It was not very important to patients
- It was not used in PIs in 2002 survey
- It is a somewhat unsatisfactory question in that patients who did not need post-discharge services sometimes do not know how to answer.

* * *

48. Would you recommend this hospital to your family and friends?

This question was removed because:

- It was not very important to patients
- It was not used in PIs in 2002 survey
- It is a somewhat unsatisfactory question because some patients comment that they are not in a position to recommend hospitals, when choice is often limited by geographical location.

* * *

53 to 57. EQ-5D health status question

These questions were removed because:

- They were not used in PIs in 2002 survey
- This is adequately covered by the single health status question that is still included.

* * *

5 PI Questions removed from core questionnaire

Again, in this section, unless other wise stated, question numbers refer to the 2002 questionnaire.

The following question was removed:

10. How organised was the admissions process?

- It had a high number of missing responses (5.9%)
- It is difficult to use in quality improvement programmes as it is not clear what is included in the admissions process (GP referral/ letter from hospital/ medical records personnel/ triage in A&E/ clerking by doctors).

* * *

20. and 24. Was there one [nurse/doctor] in overall charge of your care?

These questions were removed because:

- Trusts complained about the nurse question because the *named nurse* policy has now changed
- The 2002 importance study shows that “knowing the name of staff in charge of my care” is 26th out of 30 importance ratings
- For political reasons, it is important, as far as possible, to keep the doctor and nurse questions parallel.

* * *

19. How much food were you given?

This question was removed because:

- It had a high number of missing responses (7.8%)
- It was not very important to patients
- Difficult to evaluate because very few patients say they were given too much food.

* * *

22. If you had anxieties or fears about your condition or treatment, did a doctor discuss them with you?

This question was removed because:

- There is overlap between the content of this question and questions 16 and 27 in the 2004 questionnaire

* * *

26. If you had anxieties or fears about your condition or treatment, did a nurse discuss them with you?

This question was removed because:

- There is overlap between the content of this question and questions 19 and 27 in the 2004 questionnaire

* * *

34. When you needed help from staff eating your meals, did you get it at the time you needed it?

This question was removed because:

- It was not a very useful performance indicator question, as 79% of patients stated that they did not need help eating their meals.

* * *

6 Minor changes to existing questions

(Question numbers refer to new inpatient questionnaire 2003/04 version 5)

1. Was your hospital stay planned in advance or an emergency?

The response options to this question were changed back to a previous version of the question (used in the pilots for the inpatient survey in 2001), as the percentage of missing responses was lower with the 3-response option version (6.0%) than with the 2-response option version (7.2%). Note that this is necessarily a problematic question, as it is necessary to channel patients through the emergency or planned admission sections of the questionnaire at the beginning, but patients come into hospitals in a variety of non-standard methods and it is difficult to capture this.

The question now reads as follows:

- 1 Emergency/dialled 999/immediately referred by GP or NHS direct → Go to 2
- 2 Waiting list or planned in advance → Go to 4
- 3 Something else → Go to 4

* * *

3. Following arrival at the hospital, how long did you wait before admission to a room or ward and bed?

The response options for this question were reduced because only 3.1% of respondents ticked “12 hours or longer” in the previous version.

- 1 Less than 1 hour
- 2 At least 1 hour but less than 2 hours
- 3 At least 2 hours but less than 4 hours
- 4 At least 4 hours but less than 8 hours
- 5 8 hours or longer
- 6 Can't remember
- 7 I did not have to wait

The 2002 questionnaire included the following question:

Did you feel you had to wait a long time to get to your room or ward and bed?

There was a relatively high percentage of missing responses to this question (5.4%). It is possible that the words “room or ward” are confusing.

The question wording has now been changed:

9. From the time you arrived at the hospital, did you feel that you had to wait a long time to get to a bed on a ward?

* * *

The 2002 questionnaire included the following question:

During you stay in hospital, did you ever share a room or ward with patients of the opposite sex?

The question wording has now been changed and “ward” has been replaced with “bay”:

10. During your stay in hospital, did you ever share a room or bay with patients of the opposite sex?

The reason for this is that the main problem is mixed sex **bays**, rather than mixed sex wards, which can have separate male and female bays.

* * *

The 2002 questionnaire included the following question:

Were you ever bothered by noise at night? (Please tick all that apply)

- 1 No
- 2 Yes, from other patients
- 3 Yes, from hospital staff
- 4 Yes, from something else

This question was changed to two questions with Yes/No response options:

11. Were you ever bothered by noise at night from other patients?

12. Were you ever bothered by noise at night from hospital staff?

The reasons for this change are:

- The original question requires respondents to switch from a “Tick one only” mode to “Tick all that apply” and some respondents are confused by that.
- “Tick all that apply” questions create the most problems with trusts submitting inaccurate data, as the question requires as many columns as there are response options, whereas all the other questions require one column each.
- Only 5% of respondents said they had been bothered by “something else”, so that option has been omitted.
- It will still be possible to analyse this question using the same criteria as the 2002 survey.
- The replacement questions take up only slightly more room on the questionnaire than the original question.

* * *

The 2002 questionnaire included the following question:

Did you want to be more involved in decisions made about your care and treatment?

The question wording has now been changed to:

24. Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?

The reason for this change was that the later version of the question is less leading, and this brings it into line with other questionnaires (e.g. the Emergency Care Questionnaire) that use the later version of the question.

* * *

The 2002 questionnaire included the following question:

Did you find someone on the hospital staff to talk to about your concerns?

This question has now been changed to:

27. Did you find someone on the hospital staff to talk to about your worries and fears?

The reason for this change is:

- It was thought that “worries and fears” would be understood by a lower reading age than “concerns”.

* * *

The following question was included in the 2002 questionnaire:

Was your discharge delayed for any reason? (Tick all that apply)

- No
- Yes, because of my health
- Yes, I had to wait for medicines or drugs
- Yes, I had to wait to see a doctor
- Yes, I had to wait for an ambulance
- Yes, another reason

This question was changed to three questions:

35. On the day you left hospital, was your discharge delayed for any reason?

- Yes → **Go to 36**
- No → **Go to 38**

36. What was the main reason for the delay? (Tick ONE only)

- I had to wait for **medicines**
- I had to wait to **see the doctor**
- I had to wait for an **ambulance**
- Something else

37. How long was the delay?

- Up to 1 hour
- Longer than 1 hour but no longer than 2 hours
- Longer than 2 hours but no longer than 4 hours
- Longer than 4 hours

The reasons for this change are:

- The original question requires respondents to switch from a “Tick one only” mode to “Tick all that apply” and some respondents are confused by that.
- “Tick all that apply” questions create the most problems with trusts submitting inaccurate data, as the question requires as many columns as there are response options, whereas all the other questions require one column each.
- Delays due to the patient’s health or “another reason” cannot be evaluated, so those options have been omitted.
- It will still be possible to analyse this question using the same criteria as for the survey 2002 survey.
- The additional question about the length of the delay will provide more useful information about the extent of the problems associated with delayed discharge.

* * *

In the 2002 questionnaire, there was a relatively high number of missing responses (5.9%) for the following question:

Did someone tell you about what danger signals regarding your illness or treatment to watch for after you went home?

The question was therefore re-worded:

40. Did a member of staff tell you about any danger signals you should watch for after you went home?

- 1 Yes, completely
- 2 Yes, to some extent
- 3 No

Also, an extra response option was added:

- 4 It was not necessary

* * *

7 New questions added

17. Did you have confidence and trust in the doctors treating you?

20. Did you have confidence and trust in the nurses treating you?

These questions were added because:

- “Confidence and trust in doctors and nurses” Ranked the highest of 30 issues in importance to patients
- Trust in nurses and doctors had respectively third and fourth highest correlations (of all evaluative questions in the 12-page questionnaire) with overall rating quality of care.

* * *

22. In your opinion, were there enough nurses on duty to care for you in hospital?

This question was added because:

- Although this item was not directly tested in importance study, it is very often raised as an important issue in focus groups.

* * *

25. How much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?

This question was added because:

- “Clear explanations of my condition and treatment” ranked second out of 30 importance issues.
- “Given enough information” had 8th highest correlation (of all evaluative questions in the 12-page questionnaire) with overall rating of care.
- The question relating to information given in A&E has been removed and this question substitutes for that one.

* * *

30. How many minutes after you used the call button did it usually take before you got the help you needed?

This question was added because:

- “Prompt help from hospital staff when I need it” ranked 12th of the 30 issues in the inpatient importance study.
- This question will provide quantifiable results.

42. Did hospital staff tell you who to contact if you were worried about your condition or treatment after you left hospital?

1 Yes

2 No

This is an adaptation of a more complex that was used in the question bank in the 2002 survey. The original question allowed respondents to state who they had been told to contact (GP/ 999 /the hospital /someone else) but it was not a very good question because some patients had been told to contact more than one, depending on the problem they were experiencing, so they sometimes ticked more than one box. Evaluations of this question have always been based on whether or not the patient knows who to contact, rather than which body they had been asked to contact in particular situations.

The reason for adding this question is:

- This issue was not included in the inpatient importance study, but “Knowing whom to contact if I had concerns after the visit” ranked 13th of 49 issues in the emergency importance survey, and “Knowing whom to contact if I had concerns after the appointment” ranked 16th of 49 issues in the outpatients importance study.

* * *

44. How would you rate how well the doctors and nurses worked together?

This question was added because:

- This question had the second highest correlation (of all evaluative questions in the 12-page questionnaire) with overall rating of quality or care.
- This is an interesting question when used in conjunction with the results of staff surveys
- This is a good co-ordination of care item, of which there are not many in the existing questionnaire.

8 Item non-response for questions included in the new 2003 survey

The table below shows the percentage of missing responses for each question included in the new core questionnaire. Missing responses greater than 5% are marked in bold.

Most of these figures are based on responses to the core questions used in the 2002 national inpatient survey. Where a question was not included in the core questionnaire, Picker 12-page survey data or pilot data have been used.

Question	% missing responses (of those eligible to respond)
1. Was your hospital stay planned in advance or an emergency?	6.0
2. How organised was the care you received in A&E?	3.4
3. Following arrival at the hospital, how long did you wait before admission to a room or ward and bed?	3.4
4. How do you feel about the length of time you were on the waiting list?	5.3
5. When you were told you would be going into hospital, were you given enough notice of your date of admission?	4.5
6. Were you given a choice of admission date?	New question
7. Was your admission date changed by the hospital?	4.5
8. Were you given a choice about which hospital you were admitted to?	New question
9. From the time you arrived at the hospital, did you feel that you had to wait a long time to get to a bed on a ward?	New question
10. During your stay in hospital, did you ever share a room or bay with patients of the opposite sex?	2.4
11. Were you ever bothered by noise at night from other patients?	New question
12. Were you ever bothered by noise at night from hospital staff?	New question
13. In your opinion, how clean was the hospital room or ward that you were in?	1.7
14. How clean were the toilets and bathrooms that you used in hospital?	1.9
15. How would you rate the hospital food?	2.1
16. When you had important questions to ask a doctor, did you get answers that you could understand?	2.5

Question	% missing responses (of those eligible to respond)
17. Did you have confidence and trust in the doctors treating you?	2.0
18. Did doctors talk in front of you as if you weren't there?	2.6
19. When you had important questions to ask a nurse, did you get answers that you could understand?	2.1
20. Did you have confidence and trust in the nurses treating you?	2.0
21. Did nurses talk in front of you as if you weren't there?	2.3
22. In your opinion, were there enough nurses on duty to care for you in hospital?	2.4
23. Sometimes in a hospital, a member of staff will say one thing and another will say something quite different. Did this happen to you?	2.4
24. Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions made about your care and treatment?	3.4
25. How much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?	2.8
26. If your family or someone else close to you wanted to talk to a doctor, did they have enough opportunity to do so?	2.9
27. Did you find someone on the hospital staff to talk to about your worries and fears?	2.9
28. Were you given enough privacy when discussing your condition or treatment?	3.8
29. Were you given enough privacy when being examined or treated?	2.3
30. How many minutes after you used the call button did it usually take before you got the help you needed?	4.1
31. During your stay in hospital, did you have any tests, x-rays or scans other than blood or urine tests?	3.2
32. Were your scheduled tests, x-rays or scans performed on time?	3.6
33. Were you ever in any pain?	3.8
34. Do you think the hospital staff did everything they could to help control your pain?	1.7
35. On the day you left hospital, was your discharge delayed for any reason?	New question
36. What was the main reason for the delay?	New question
37. How long was the delay?	New question

Question	% missing responses (of those eligible to respond)
38. Did a member of staff explain the purpose of the medicines you were to take at home in a way you could understand?	3.8
39. Did a member of staff tell you about medication side effects to watch for when you went home?	2.2
40. Did someone tell you about what danger signals regarding your illness or treatment to watch for after you went home	New response options
41. Did the doctors or nurses give your family or someone close to you all the information they needed to help you recover?	4.8
42. Did hospital staff tell you who to contact if you were worried about your condition or treatment after you left hospital?	New response options
43. Overall, did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the hospital?	2.4
44. How would you rate how well the doctors and nurses worked together?	3.3
45. Overall, how would you rate the care you received?	2.5
46. Are you male or female?	2.2
47. What was your year of birth?	2.3
48. How old were you when you left full-time education?	4.6
49. Overall, how would you rate your health during the past 4 weeks ?	2.2
50. To which of these ethnic groups would you say you belong?	4.5

9 Conclusions

The revised questionnaire includes almost all of the questions that were used in the 2002 performance indicator calculation, and includes some minor alterations to the wording of the original questions. Any questions that have been removed from the core can be retained for optional use in the question bank, if trusts wish to make comparisons using those questions.