

THE KEY FINDINGS REPORT FOR THE 2008 EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT SURVEY

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NHS PATIENT SURVEY PROGRAMME

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1 Executive summary

1.1 About this survey

The national NHS patient survey programme is the longest established, and one of the largest, patient survey programmes in the world. The Healthcare Commission assumed responsibility for the programme in April 2004, funding the design, development and co-ordination of the surveys and overseeing implementation of the programme. The survey programme provides a unique opportunity to monitor patients' experiences of healthcare and is an important part of the Healthcare Commission's annual health check of NHS trusts.

This report details the key findings from a survey of patients who attended an emergency department (A&E) in England in January, February or March 2008.¹ Similar surveys of emergency departments were carried out in 2003 and 2004.² This report focuses on those areas where patients' responses in 2008 are significantly different from those reported in 2003 and 2004. These changes may appear small – often around one percentage point – but we have reported the differences that are “statistically significant”. This means that we have carried out tests to identify the changes that are unlikely to have occurred by chance. Where there has been no “significant” change, differences or comparisons are either not mentioned or we clearly state that there has been no change.

Between April 2007 and August 2008, just under 50,000 patients responded to the survey asking about their recent experiences of attending an emergency department at one of 151 acute NHS hospital trusts in England.³ This represents an overall adjusted response rate of 40%. Just over half of those who responded were women (55%), over half were aged over 50 (55%), and 9% were from a minority ethnic group.

1.2 Key findings

Respondents' rating of the overall care they received in the emergency department has improved, with a higher proportion rating it as excellent in 2008 (35%) compared with 2004 (34%) and 2003 (31%). However, the percentage rating their care as poor or very poor has not improved since 2004 (5%).

There were notable and encouraging improvements with regard to communication by staff, with higher proportions of respondents saying:

- they definitely had enough time to discuss their health or medical problem with staff (69% in 2008 compared with 66% in 2004 and 62% in 2003)
- that doctors or nurses definitely listened to them (76%) than in 2004 (74%) and 2003 (73%)
- that a doctor or nurse completely discussed any anxieties or fears with them about their condition or treatment (53% compared with 51% in 2004 and 49% in 2003).

¹ Trusts were able to select one of three months, January or February or March 2008, from which to draw a sample of 850 eligible patients.

² The sampling periods for the previous emergency surveys differed: for the 2003 survey trusts drew a sample of patients who attended the emergency department in November 2002 or January 2003, while for the 2004 survey trusts had the choice of sampling from June, July or August 2004.

³ All acute NHS trusts in England that have an emergency department took part in the survey, including one specialist trust, Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Progress has also been made with regard to staff helping to control patients' pain and in the provision of information to patients on leaving the emergency department:

- of those respondents who experienced pain in 2008, 59% thought staff definitely did everything they could to help control their pain compared with 56% in 2004 and 55% in 2003
- The percentage of respondents who said that the purpose of their new medication was completely explained to them by staff increased to 84% in 2008, up from 81% in 2004 and 82% in 2003.
- A greater proportion of patients said they were given a complete explanation of possible side effects of their medication, increasing from 35% in 2003 to 36% in 2004 and 37% in 2008
- Of those patients who needed information about when they could resume their usual activities, such as going back to work or driving a car, 37% said they definitely received it; an increase from 35% in 2004.
- Almost two thirds of respondents (65%) said that a member of staff told them what danger signals regarding their illness or treatment to watch for after they went home, either completely or to some extent. This is an increase from 63% in 2004 and 2003.

Areas that show no improvement or show a deterioration include:

- the involvement of patients in decisions about their care and treatment
Of those respondents who wanted to be involved in decisions about their care and treatment, 62% said that they were definitely involved as much as they wanted to be, a decrease from 64% in 2004 and 63% in 2003.
- being given enough privacy when being examined
Although the majority (79%) said that they were definitely given enough privacy when being examined or treated, this had decreased from 80% in 2004 (though is an increase from 78% in 2003).

Results also suggest that respondents perceived they waited longer at various stages of their care than in 2004. Though when compared with results from 2003, some improvements in waiting times are shown:

- A smaller proportion of respondents reported that they first spoke to a nurse or doctor within 15 minutes of arriving at the emergency department (40%) than in 2004 (47%). This question was not asked in 2003.
- Fewer respondents said they were examined by a doctor or nurse within an hour of arrival in 2008 (73%) compared with 2004 (74%). However, this represents an improvement from the 2003 survey, where 66% of respondents said they were examined within an hour of arrival.
- The proportion of respondents who said they stayed in the emergency department for more than four hours has increased from 23% in 2004 to 27% in 2008. Though again, this is an improvement from the 2003 survey results, where 32% of respondents reported that they were in the emergency department for more than four hours.

2 Introduction

The national patient survey programme is owned by the Department of Health and has been operating since 2002. The Healthcare Commission administers the programme. The Healthcare Commission exists to inspect the quality and value for money of healthcare, to equip patients and the public with the best possible information about the provision of healthcare, and to promote improvements in healthcare. Patients' experience of health services is at the heart of the Healthcare Commission's work: it is the aim of the Healthcare Commission and the Co-ordination Centre to see health services shaped by the issues that matter most to patients and the public.

This report summarises key findings from the third survey of emergency departments and highlights differences with the 2004 and 2003 results. The 2008 findings will be used by the Healthcare Commission as part of its 2008/09 annual health check to measure the quality of care being provided to patients.¹

The survey was carried out in 151 acute NHS trusts in England. Each trust identified a random list of 850 eligible patients who had attended an emergency department in January, February or March 2008. Patients were eligible if they were 16 years or older and had attended an emergency department within the trust for the chosen 'sampling month'. The following were not included in the sample:

- attendances at Minor Injuries Units or Walk-in Centres
- patients admitted to hospital via medical or surgical admissions units and who therefore did not visit the emergency department
- planned attendances at outpatient clinics which operate within the emergency department (e.g. fracture clinics).

Changes in the survey results over time are discussed in this report. Z-tests were used to test for differences between years and all differences noted in this report are significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$)². Appendicised tables present data to one decimal place, but where values are discussed in the text of the report, these are rounded up from two decimal places. Due to rounding, the sum of responses discussed in the report may not always equal 100%.

More information on the methods and tables showing the results of this survey are included in the appendices.

¹<http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/guidanceforhealthcarestaff/nhsstaff/annualhealthcheck/annualhealthcheck2008/09.cfm>

² The Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons was used in cases where data was available for all three years

3 Getting to the emergency department

3.1 Arrival at the emergency department

In order to provide a range of emergency services and to improve access to appropriate care, additional services such as NHS Direct and NHS walk-in centres have been introduced in recent years. However, there is evidence to show that many people are unaware of the range of urgent and emergency care services available or are unsure about how and when to use them.^{1,2}

The survey asked patients why they decided to go to the emergency department. Just over a quarter (27%) said that they decided for themselves that they needed to go to the emergency department, while a further 15% said that somebody else, such as a friend or colleague, decided that they needed to go. Around a quarter (26%) reported being taken to the emergency department by the ambulance service and 24% were told to go to an emergency department by a health professional, such as a GP. Relatively small proportions of respondents attended the emergency department because their GP was not available (5%), because they wanted a second opinion (1%), or because they were not aware of any other service available at the time (1%).

Since the previous emergency department survey there has been an increase in the proportion of patients travelling to the emergency department by ambulance (33% compared with 28% in 2004) and a decrease in the proportion who arrived by car (53% compared with 57% in 2004). Relatively small proportions of respondents said they travelled to the emergency department by taxi (5%), by public transport (5%), on foot (3%) or by other means (1%).

Availability of parking at hospitals can be an important issue for patients. The patient survey has shown that of those patients who had travelled to hospital by car, just over a quarter (26%) said it was not possible to find a convenient place to park in the hospital car park³.

3.2 Ambulance services

Questions on ambulance care have not been included in recent inpatient surveys within the national NHS patient survey programme, and the 2008 NHS Ambulance Trust survey examined category C services (i.e. non-urgent 999 calls) rather than emergency 999 and urgent calls. Questions to measure patients' experiences of the care received from the ambulance service were therefore incorporated in the 2008 emergency department survey to monitor performance at a national level.⁴

Of those respondents who travelled to hospital in an ambulance, 78% said the ambulance crew had 'definitely' explained their care and treatment in a way they could understand, and 18% said

¹ Healthcare Commission, *Not just a matter of time: A review of urgent and emergency care services in England*, September 2008.

² O'Cathain A, Coleman P and Nicholl J. Characteristics of the emergency and urgent care system important to patients: a qualitative study, *Journal of Health Services, Research and Policy* 2008; 13(2): 19-25.

³ Respondents who travelled to hospital by car, but did not need to find a place to park, were excluded from this calculation

⁴ The results from these questions can not be used to measure the performance of individual Ambulance Trusts as it's not possible to attribute individual survey responses to a particular NHS Ambulance Trust

they had 'to some extent'. Most respondents rated the overall care received from the ambulance service as 'excellent' (69%) or 'very good' (22%). Only 3% of respondents rated the care from the ambulance service as 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Such positive ratings of the care received from ambulance staff are consistent with findings from other patient surveys, such as the previous inpatient surveys. However, these survey findings cannot be directly compared to the results from the 2004 ambulance survey or the 2006 inpatient survey (which included limited questions on ambulance services) due to differences in the sample of patients.¹

¹ The 2004 ambulance survey included patients attended to by the ambulance crew but not conveyed to hospital. The 2006 inpatient survey included only those patients who were admitted to hospital following their attendance at the emergency department, along with inpatients who had planned admissions. In contrast, this survey covered all patients attending A&E, whether discharged or admitted, and of which only a subset had travelled by ambulance.

4 Time spent in the emergency department

4.1 Initial contact with a health professional

After patients have been 'booked in' at reception, those with immediate medical needs should be identified, although most patients usually have to wait to be seen by a clinician before their needs are fully assessed.¹

The survey asked patients how long they had to wait before they first spoke to a nurse or doctor. Forty percent of respondents said they first spoke to a nurse or doctor within 15 minutes of arriving at the emergency department. This represents a seven percent fall since the 2004 survey² The proportion of patients who waited more than 60 minutes before they first spoke to a nurse or doctor increased to 13% in 2008 from 10% in 2004.

These findings may reflect a change in how emergency department attendances are managed, rather than a decline in trust performance. The approach to 'see and treat' patients at the same time, rather than patients initially being assessed by a 'triage' nurse, may provide one explanation for why fewer respondents said they first spoke to a health professional within 15 minutes of arriving at the emergency department.³ The emergency and urgent care services review found that most emergency departments use a mix of these two methods, depending for example on time of day.⁴

4.2 Waiting to be examined

Patients were asked how long they had to wait before being examined by a doctor or nurse. Almost three quarters of respondents (73%) said they were examined by a doctor or nurse within an hour of arriving at the emergency department. This is an increase from 66% in 2003 but a drop of one percentage point since 2004 (74%). and, again, may reflect the approach to 'see and treat' patients.

Compared with the 2004 survey results, fewer respondents in 2008 said they either 'did not have to wait' or that they waited between one and 30 minutes to be examined: down from 53% in 2004 to 51% in 2008 (Figure 1). However, only 2% of respondents said they waited more than 4 hours before being examined by a doctor or nurse, a drop of 1% since 2004 (3%) and a decrease of five percentage points since 2003 (7%).

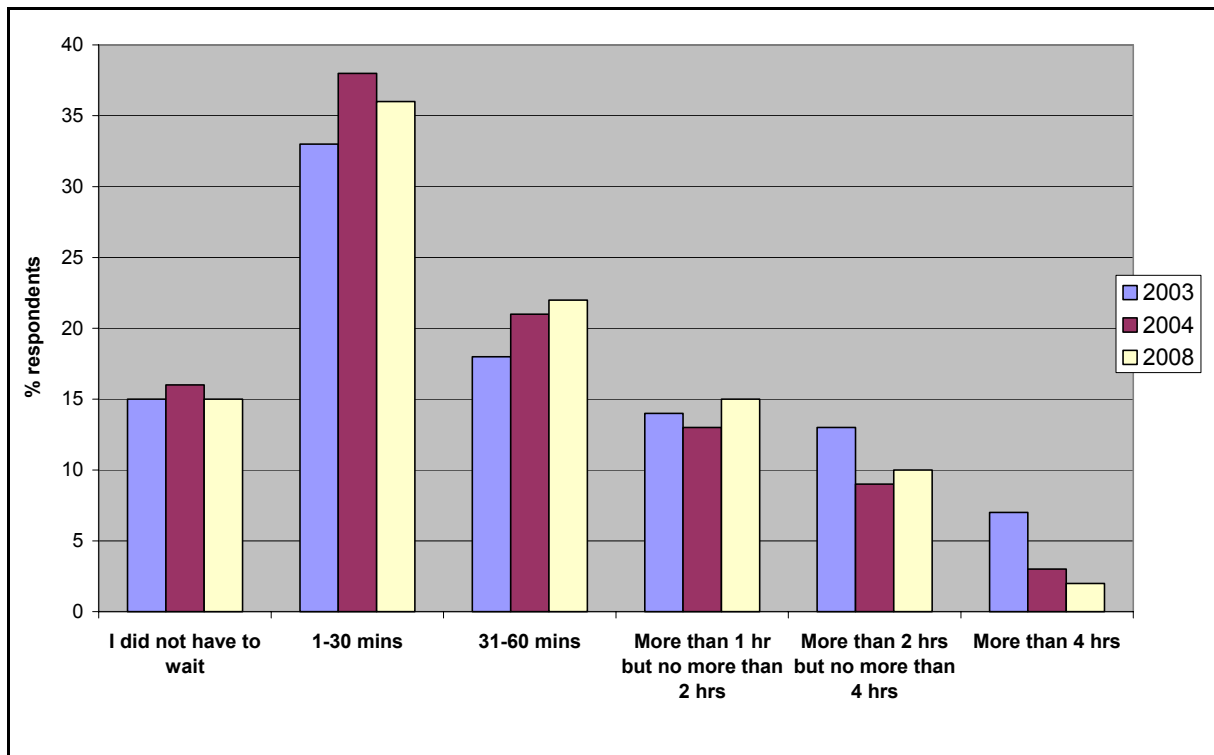
¹ Healthcare Commission, *Not just a matter of time: A review of urgent and emergency care services in England*, September 2008.

² This question was not included in the 2003 emergency department survey

³ Initial assessment by a triage nurse was not a mandatory practice and may not have been used by all organisations

⁴ Healthcare Commission, *Not just a matter of time: A review of urgent and emergency care services in England*, September 2008.

Figure 1 Percentage of respondents who waited certain time periods before being examined by a nurse or doctor by survey year



Research has shown that patients waiting in the emergency department want information about why they are waiting and how long they will have to wait.^{1,2} The provision of information to patients about the expected length of wait is important as evidence suggests that people are more willing to wait longer if they are given this information.³ The proportion of patients who do not wait to complete their treatment when attending emergency departments is generally higher when people wait longer for their care to start.⁴

There was no improvement in the provision of such information since 2004. Of those respondents who had to wait to be examined by a doctor or nurse, more than half (56%) said they had not been told how long the wait would be; the same proportion as in 2004 but an improvement on 58% in 2003. Of those patients who were told how long they would have to wait, 15% reported that their wait was shorter than they had been told. This is an increase from 13% in 2003 but a drop of one percentage point since 2004 (16%). Similarly, compared with the 2004 survey a higher proportion

¹ O’Cathain A, Coleman P and Nicholl J. Characteristics of the emergency and urgent care system important to patients: a qualitative study, *Journal of Health Services, Research and Policy* 2008; 13(2): 19-25.

² Picker Institute Europe, *Development of the questionnaire for use in the NHS Emergency Department Survey 2008, April 2008*. [See http://www.nhssurveys.org/Filestore/documents/ED08_Survey_development_report_v4.pdf]

³ Gerard K, Lattimer V. Preferences of patients for emergency services during usual GP surgery hours: a discrete choice experiment, *Family Practice* 2004; 22, 1:28-36.

⁴ Healthcare Commission, *Not just a matter of time: A review of urgent and emergency care services in England*, September 2008.

of respondents in 2008 said they had to wait longer than they had been told (11% compared with 10%), although this is an improvement from 13% in 2003.

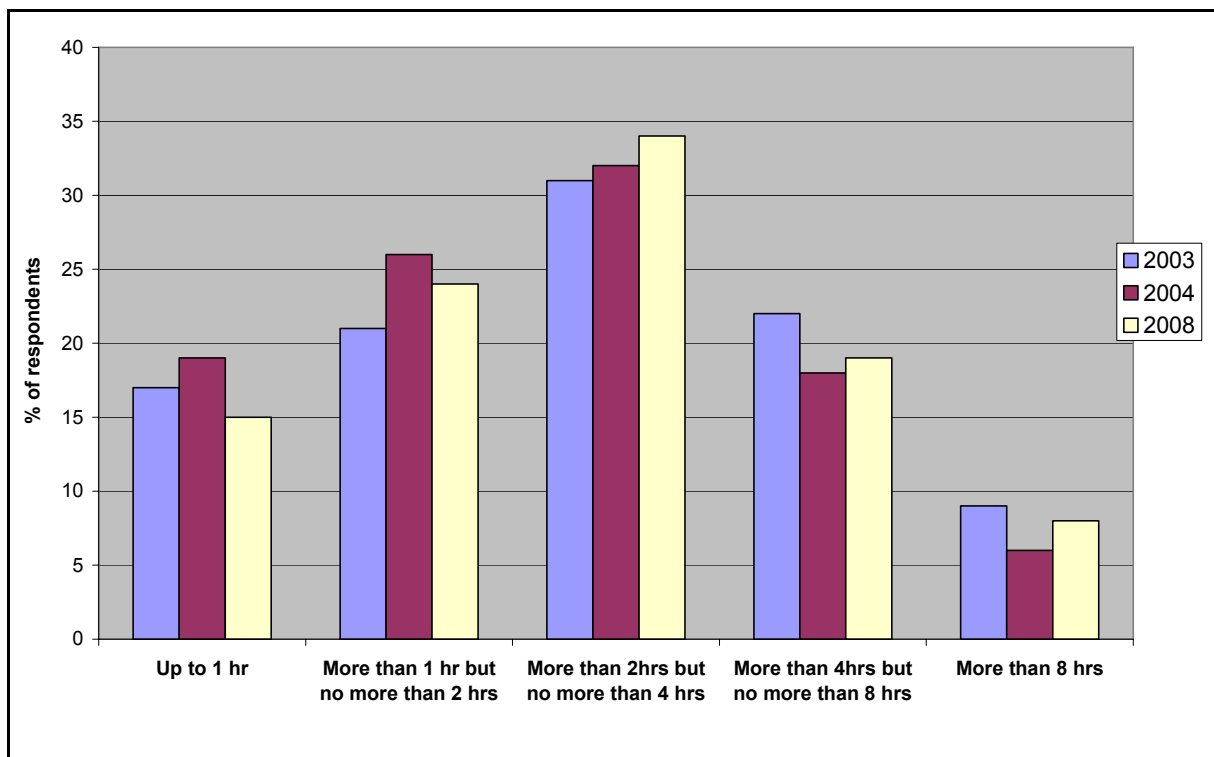
4.3 Overall time spent in the emergency department

A maximum four-hour wait in the emergency department from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge has been an operational standard in the NHS since 2004. The national standard is for 98% of patients to be dealt with within this timeframe, which allows for 2% of exceptions where this might not be clinically appropriate.¹ Performance against this standard has shown to have improved considerably over recent years, with most trusts now achieving this target.¹

Waiting times reported by patients in the survey cannot be directly compared with waiting time data from NHS trusts for a number of reasons, such as the exclusion of patients aged under the age of 16 from the survey. However, the information can be used to assess trends over time.

As shown in Figure 2, the proportion of respondents whose overall visit to the emergency department lasted up to one hour is smaller than in the previous surveys – particularly compared with the 2004 survey where 19% of respondents said their overall visit to the emergency department only lasted up to one hour. This compares with only 15% of respondents in 2008.

Figure 2 The overall time spent by respondents in the emergency department by survey year



The proportion of respondents who said their visit to the emergency department lasted no longer than four hours has also fallen from 77% in 2004 to 73% in 2008, however, this is an improvement from 68% in 2003. This finding may reflect a more recent change in how emergency department

¹ Healthcare Commission, *Not just a matter of time: A review of urgent and emergency care services in England*, September 2008.

attendances are managed, rather than a decline in trust performance since 2004. A review of accident and emergency services by the Healthcare Commission in 2005¹ showed that around 45% of emergency departments can admit patients into their own admission or assessment units. These may be used for those patients who, for clinical reasons, require more than four hours in A&E departments, because they need further assessment, observation or tests before a final diagnosis can be made. There is evidence to suggest that the practice of admitting patients from emergency departments to admission units is increasing.² It is possible that patients do not always distinguish between the period in the emergency department and the period in an admission or assessment unit, and may count both as the overall time spent in the emergency department.¹

¹ Healthcare Commission, *Acute hospital portfolio: Accident and emergency*, August 2005.

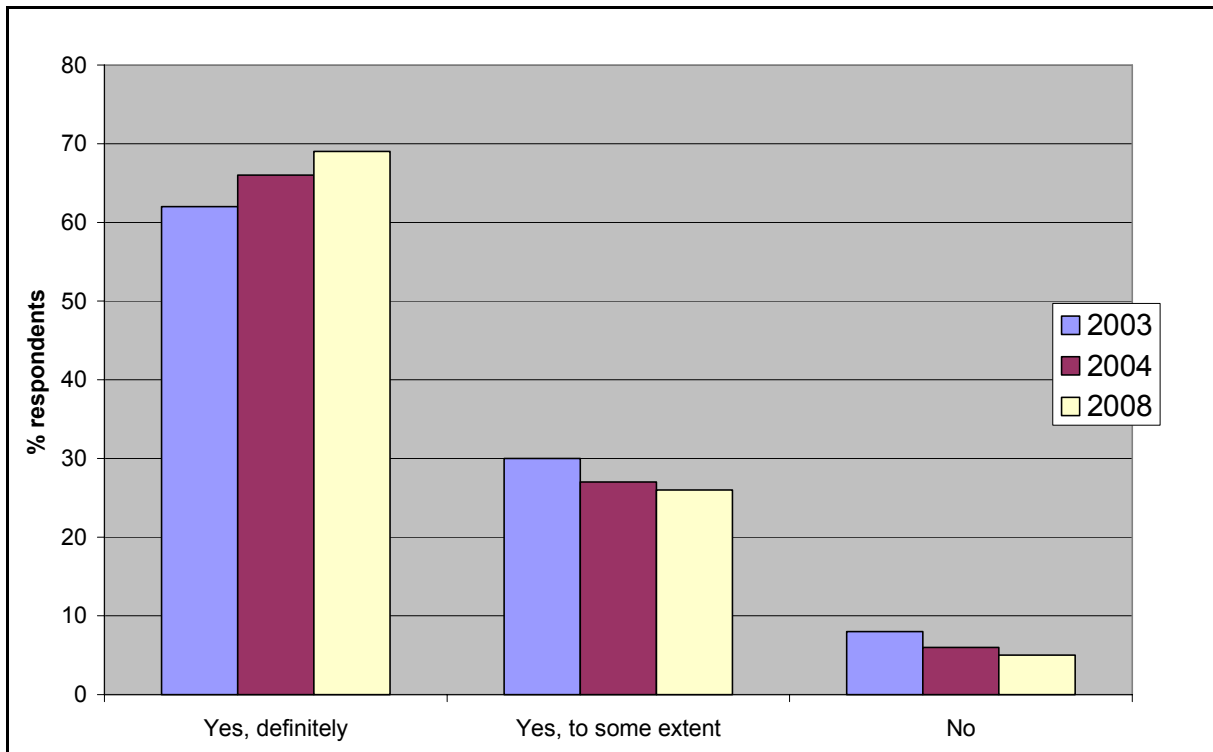
² Healthcare Commission, *Management of admission in acute hospitals: Review of the national findings 2006*, 2006.

5 Care and treatment

5.1 Communication by staff

The survey showed notable and encouraging improvements with regard to communication by staff. As shown in Figure 3, 69% of respondents in 2008 said they 'definitely' had enough time to discuss their health or medical problems with a doctor or nurse – an increase of three percentage points since 2004 (66%) and seven percentage points since 2003 (62%).

Figure 3: Did you have enough time to discuss your health or medical problem with the doctor or nurse?



Around three quarters of respondents (76%) said that doctors and nurses 'definitely' listened to what they had to say, while 21% said they did 'to some extent'. This shows an improvement since the previous surveys: in 2003 73% said doctors and nurses 'definitely' listened to what they had to say and in 2004 74% of respondents said this was the case.

The survey results show further improvements over time in staff communication with patients. A greater proportion of respondents (53%) said a doctor or nurse 'completely' discussed with them any anxieties or fears they had about their condition or treatment. Although this is an increase of two percentage points since 2004 (51%) and four percentage points since 2003 (49%), there is still much room for improvement.

In the 2008 survey, 67% of respondents said a doctor or nurse explained their condition or treatment in a way they could 'completely' understand, while 27% said they did this 'to some extent'. These are unchanged from findings in the 2004 survey, but are an improvement on the 2003 results.

There has been no improvement in the proportions of respondents who said doctors or nurses talked in front of them as if they were not there. However, only a relatively small proportion of respondents reported that doctors or nurses talked in front of them 'to some extent' (11%) and 6% said this 'definitely' happened.

5.2 Confidence and trust in staff

Almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) reported that they 'definitely' had confidence and trust in the doctors and nurses examining and treating them, and 22% said they did 'to some extent'. These figures remain unchanged since the 2003 and 2004 surveys.

For patients to receive individualised care, they should be able to get attention from a member of staff when needed. There has, however, been a decline in the proportion of respondents who said they could 'always' get a member of staff to help them if they needed attention: down from 57% in 2004 to 55% in 2008.¹

It could be reasonably expected that if patients receive conflicting information from health professionals this could negatively affect their perceptions of the knowledge and competence of staff. The survey asked patients if a member of staff said one thing and another said something quite different. Six percent of respondents said this 'definitely' happened – the same proportion as in 2004. However the percentage of respondents who said that this happened 'to some extent' has increased to 11% in 2008 from 10% in 2003 and 2004. Similarly, the proportion of respondents who said they did not receive conflicting information from staff in the emergency department has fallen slightly from 84% in 2003 and 2004 to 83% in 2008.

5.3 Information and involvement in decisions

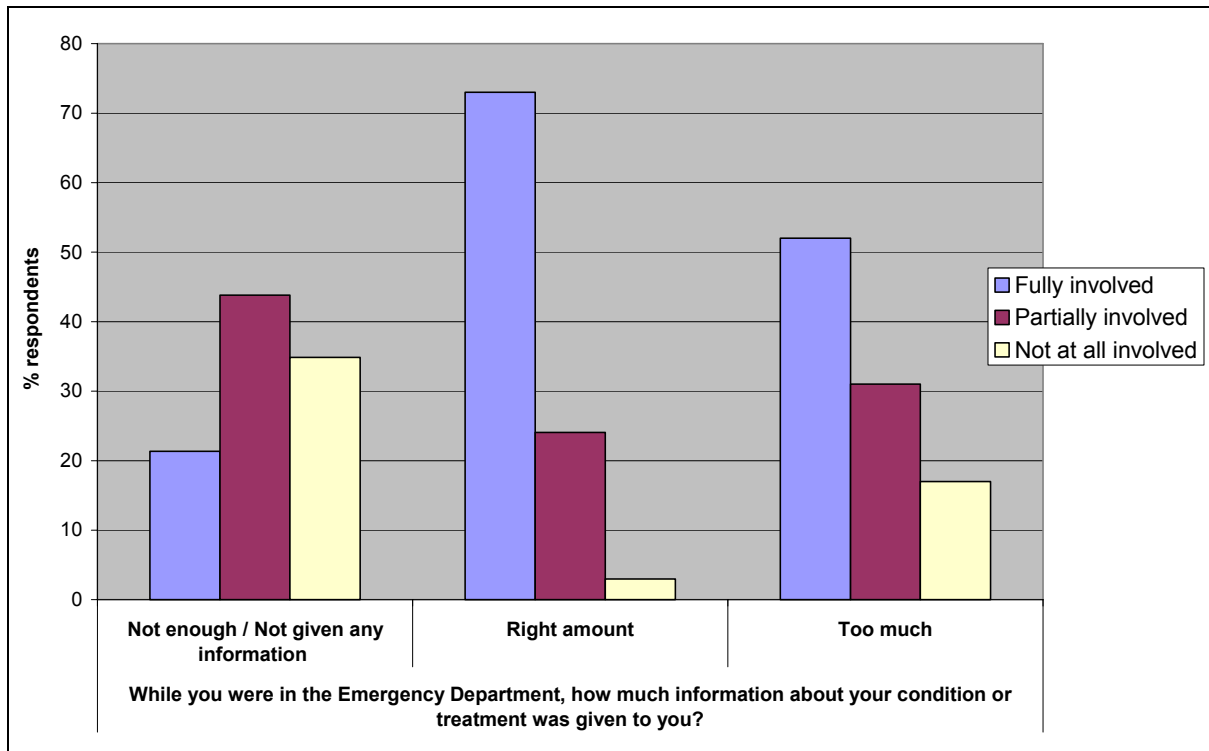
Over three quarters of respondents (77%) said they were given the right amount of information about their condition or treatment. Fifteen percent of respondents said they did not get enough information and 7% said they were not given any information about their condition or treatment. These findings remain unchanged since 2004 though are an improvement from 9% not being given any information in 2003.

Providing patients with enough information about their condition or treatment has been shown to be important for their engagement in decisions about their care.² Findings from this survey support this theory: of those patients who received the right amount of information 73% said they were 'definitely' involved in decisions about their care and treatment, compared with only 21% of respondents who said they were not given enough information (Figure 4).

¹ This question was not included in the 2003 emergency department survey

² Redding D. and Boyd J. Patient and public involvement leads to satisfaction, *Health Service Journal*, 23 October 2008.

Figure 4 Percentage of respondents who felt they were involved in decisions about their care and treatment by the amount of information provided to them



Involving patients in decisions about their care and treatment is important for encouraging patients to take greater responsibility for their own health, which in turn may result in reducing risk factors and preventing ill health.¹ Furthermore, there is evidence from other patient surveys that the more involved patients are in decisions about their care and treatment, the higher their overall satisfaction with their care.²

The survey results show that for those respondents who were well enough to be involved in decisions about their care and treatment, 62% said they were 'definitely' involved as much as they wanted to be. This is a decrease of two percentage points since 2004 (64%) and one percentage point since 2003 (63%) One in ten respondents (10%) said they had not been involved at all in decisions about their care and treatment - an increase of one percentage point since 2004.

¹ Coulter A. Patient engagement: why is it important? In Andersson E., Tritter J. and Wilson R. *Healthy Democracy: The future of involvement in health and social care*. Involve and the NHS National Centre for Involvement: London. 2006

² Redding D. and Boyd J. Patient and public involvement leads to satisfaction, *Health Service Journal*, 23 October 2008.

5.4 Managing pain

The survey asked patients if they were in any pain while they were in the Emergency Department. A smaller proportion of respondents said they experienced pain while in the emergency department than in the previous surveys (66% compared with 69% in 2004 and 70% in 2003).

Of those respondents who experienced pain, over a third (35%) requested pain relief medication.¹ For those respondents who requested medication to control their pain:²

- 16% said they received it straight away
- 22% said they waited 1 to 5 minutes
- 27% said they waited 6 to 15 minutes
- 25% said they waited more than 15 minutes
- 9% reported they did not receive any

The surveys have shown a continued improvement in the experience of patients with regard to pain control. In 2008, 59% of respondents said that staff 'definitely' did everything they could to help control their pain, up from 56% in 2004 and 55% in 2003. Over a quarter (27%) said staff helped to control their pain 'to some extent', leaving 14% who said staff did not do everything they could to help control their pain, a drop of two percentage points since 2004 and four percentage points since 2003.

5.5 Tests

There has been a continual increase in the proportion of respondents who have had tests, such as x-rays, scans or blood tests, when they visited the emergency department. Overall, 67% of respondents had tests in 2008, an increase from 62% in 2004 and 56% in 2003.

For those patients who received tests, 62% said that a member of staff explained the results in a way they could 'definitely' understand and 25% were able to understand 'to some extent'. Despite the increase in the numbers of respondents who had tests while in the emergency department, these findings are similar to the results of the 2003 and 2004 surveys. Eight percent of respondents said a member of staff did not explain the results of the tests in a way they could understand. This is not a significant difference since the 2004 survey, but represents a drop of two percentage points since 2003 (10%). A small percentage of respondents (5%) said they were never told the results of the tests – the same proportion as in 2004 but a small increase since the 2003 survey where 3% reported this was the case.

¹ This figure excludes respondents who said they were offered or given pain relief medication without asking

² Due to a change in response categories for the preceding filter question, results are not comparable with those from 2004

6 Emergency department environment

6.1 Cleanliness

There have been no long-term improvements to patients' reports of cleanliness in the emergency department. Less than half of respondents (44%) rated the emergency department as 'very clean', representing no significant change since the 2004 survey, but a drop of four percent since 2003. The proportion who rated the emergency department as 'fairly clean' has increased from 43% in 2003, 46% in 2004 to 47% in 2008. The same percentage of respondents rated the emergency department overall as 'not very clean' or 'not at all clean' in 2008 as in 2004 and in 2003 (9%).

Reports of cleanliness of the emergency department toilets have also not improved. Of those respondents who had used the emergency department toilets, only 38% rated them as 'very clean', with 16% reporting that they were 'not very clean' or 'not at all clean'. Whilst these findings show no change since 2004, they represent a decline since the 2003 survey in which 43% rated the emergency department toilets as 'very clean'.

6.2 Privacy

On arrival at an emergency department, patients are usually booked in by a receptionist. Of those respondents who had discussed their condition with a receptionist, less than half (41%) said they were 'definitely' given enough privacy and 44% said they had only been given enough privacy 'to some extent'.¹

Patients were also asked if they were given enough privacy when being examined or treated. Although the majority of respondents said that they were 'definitely' given enough privacy (79%), this is a drop of 1% point since 2004 (80%), though an improvement on 78% in 2003. Eighteen percent of respondents said they were given enough privacy 'to some extent', a drop of one percentage point since 2003, whilst 3% reported not being given any privacy.

¹ Comparisons to previous survey results can not be made as this was a new question in the 2008 survey

6.3 Personal security

Research has shown that violence and aggression towards staff in emergency departments is a significant problem and the number of articles examining factors relating to this issue has increased in recent years.¹ Evidence suggests that incidents of violence and aggression in emergency departments are more likely to occur at night and involve younger male assailants.^{2,3} It could be reasonably expected that aggressive behaviour towards healthcare staff may also have an impact on other patients attending the department.

Around one in ten respondents to the 2008 survey (10%) said they had felt bothered or threatened to some degree by other patients in the emergency department. Whilst the proportion of patients who felt bothered or threatened by other patients decreased between the 2003 (11%) and 2004 (9%) surveys, findings from this survey show that this improvement has not continued.

7 Leaving the emergency department

Over a quarter of respondents (27%) said they were admitted to the same hospital at the end of their visit to the emergency department, up 3% since 2003 and 4% since the 2004 survey. Correspondingly, a smaller proportion of respondents went home at the end of their visit than in 2003 and 2004 (67% in 2008 compared with 70% in 2003 and 71% in 2004). Two percent of respondents were transferred to a different hospital or to a nursing home at the end of their visit to the emergency department, whilst the remaining 4% either went to stay with a friend or relative (3%) or went to stay somewhere else (1%).

Older patients are more often admitted to hospital from the emergency department than younger patients.^{4,5} The survey results support this evidence: a much higher proportion of those respondents aged over 65 years said they were admitted to the same hospital at the end of their visit to the emergency department (42%) when compared with those aged 16-35 years (15%). Over three-quarters (78%) of those respondents aged 16-35 were discharged home at the end of their emergency department attendance.

¹ Ferns T, Cork A, Rew M. Personal safety in the accident and emergency department, *British Journal of Nursing*, 2004; 14(13): 725-730.

² Winstanley S, Whittington R. Aggression towards health care staff in a UK general hospital: variation among professions and departments, *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 2004; 13:3-10

³ James A, Madeley R and Dove A. Violence and aggression in the emergency department, *Emergency Medicine* 2006; 23:431-434.

⁴ Healthcare Commission, *Acute hospital portfolio: Accident and emergency*, August 2004

⁵ Caplan GA, Brown A, Croker WD, Doolan J. Risk of admission within 4 weeks of discharge of elderly patients from the emergency department – the DEED study, *Age and Ageing* 1998; 27:697-702.

7.1 Information on medicines

Just over a third of respondents (36%) said they were prescribed new medication before they left the emergency department, 1% lower than in 2003 (37%) and 2% lower than in 2004 (38%). The survey results indicate that there has been considerable improvement in the provision of information to patients on the purpose and possible side effects of their medication.

The percentage of respondents who said that the purpose of their new medication was 'completely' explained to them by staff increased three percentage points to 84% in 2008, up from 81% in 2004. Similarly, a greater proportion of patients said they were given a 'complete' explanation of possible side effects of their medication, increasing from 35% in 2003 to 36% in 2004 and then to 37% in 2008. The proportion of respondents who said staff did not tell them about any possible side effects has decreased to 45%, a systematic improvement from 2003 (51%) and 2004 (49%). Whilst this shows progress in performance, there is still considerable scope to improve the information provided to patients on the side effects of medication.

7.2 Other information

The survey asked patients if staff told them when they could resume their usual activities, such as when to go back to work or drive a car. For patients who said they needed this type of information, 37% said they 'definitely' received it; an increase of two percentage points since 2004 (35%). A large proportion of patients, however, said they were not given this information from staff (41%). While this represents a drop of one percentage point since the 2004 survey (42%), this is still an area where significant improvements can be made.

Almost two thirds of respondents (65%) said that a member of staff told them what danger signals regarding their illness or treatment to watch for after they went home, either 'completely' (40%) or 'to some extent' (25%). This represents an increase of two percentage points since the 2003 and 2004 surveys (63%). A similar proportion of respondents said they were told who to contact if they were worried about their condition or treatment after leaving the emergency department (68%): up two percentage points since 2004 (66%). However, this still leaves around one third of patients in 2008 who were not told about danger signals to watch for (35%) or who to contact following their discharge (32%).

8 Overall

As in previous surveys, the percentage of respondents rating their overall care as 'excellent', 'very good' or 'good' was high at 88%. There has been continual improvement in the proportion of respondents rating their overall care as 'excellent', increasing from 31% in 2003, 34% in 2004 and 35% in 2008.

Despite improvements in patients' ratings of their overall care, the 2008 survey has shown a drop in the proportion of people who said that the main reason they went to the emergency department was dealt with 'completely' to their satisfaction: 67% in 2008 compared with 68% in 2004. There has also been a drop in the percentage of respondents who reported they had been treated with respect and dignity 'all of the time' while in the emergency department, down from 79% in 2004 to 78% in 2008, though this is an improvement on 77% in 2003.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1: About the national NHS patient survey programme

The national NHS patient survey programme, which the Healthcare Commission assumed responsibility for in April 2004, is one of the largest patient survey programmes in the world. It provides a unique opportunity to monitor the experiences of healthcare users and is an important part of the Healthcare Commission's annual health check assessment of NHS organisations.

The national NHS patient survey programme aims to:

- Provide feedback from patients to healthcare organisations which can be used locally for quality improvement
- Gather information about the experiences of people using services to inform performance assessments and Healthcare Commission inspections and reviews at a local level
- Assess the performance of healthcare providers and monitor the experiences of patients at a national level
- Allow healthcare organisations to compare their results so that best practice can be shared.

During 2008, the Healthcare Commission carried out five national surveys asking patients across England about their experiences of emergency, inpatient, ambulance, mental health care and local healthcare services (including GP practices, health centres and access to dentistry). The questionnaire and methodology used in this emergency department survey was developed by the Picker Institute.

The results of the survey and data on patients' experiences in each NHS trust are available in detailed reports and can be found on the Healthcare Commission website at <http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/nationalfindings/surveys/patientsurveys.cfm>

The Healthcare Commission has archived the survey data with the UK Data Archive with appropriate safeguards that ensure patient confidentiality. Registration is necessary to access the raw data, see <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk> for further information.

How was the 2008 emergency department questionnaire developed?

Instruments to measure patients' experience were originally developed by researchers at Harvard Medical School with funds from the Picker/Commonwealth Program for Patient-Centred Care, a programme established in 1987 under the auspices of the Commonwealth Fund of New York¹. Patients were asked to report in detail on their experience of a particular provider at a specific point in time by responding to questions about whether or not certain processes or events occurred during the course of a specific episode of care². Responses to these types of questions are intended to be factual rather than evaluative and they are designed to help healthcare organisations to pinpoint problems more precisely.^{2,3}

¹ Beatrice DF, Thomas CP, Biles B. Grant making with an impact: the Picker / Commonwealth patient-centred care program. *Health Affairs* 1998; 17:236-44.

² Cleary PD and Edgman-Levitan S. Health care quality: incorporating consumer perspectives. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1997; 278:608-12.

³ Cleary PD, Edgman-Levitan S, Walker JD, Gerteis M, Delbanco TL. Using patient reports to improve medical care: a preliminary report from 10 hospitals. *Quality Management in Health Care* 1993; 2:31-8.

The 'Adult Emergency Room Survey', originally developed by the Picker Institute in the USA, was the starting point for the development of the questionnaire and survey methodology for use by NHS trusts in England during 2003. The development work included focus group discussions and interviews with patients who had recently attended emergency departments, consultation with stakeholders and NHS trusts, an 'importance study' which asked patients to complete a short survey to rate topics in terms of their importance, cognitive interviews to check patients' understanding of the questions and a mailed pilot survey in two trusts. The questionnaire was further refined in 2004 and again for the 2008 survey to incorporate policy changes and to ensure that it included the questions that were the most useful in designing quality improvements. The full reports of the development of the 2003 emergency department survey, and of its refinement for the 2004 and 2008 surveys, are available on the www.nhssurveys.org website.^{1,2,3}

Sampling

This survey was carried out in 151 English Acute NHS trusts.⁴ Each trust identified a random list of 850 eligible patients who had attended an emergency department in January, February or March 2008. Patients were not eligible if they were aged under the age of 16 years, had attended a Minor Injuries Unit or Walk-in Centre, had been admitted to hospital via Medical or Surgical Admissions Units (and therefore had not visited the emergency department) or had a planned attendance at an outpatient clinic run within the emergency department.

Comparisons between years

This report summarises the key findings of the 2008 emergency department survey and highlights differences with the 2003 and 2004 results.

The 2003, 2004 and 2008 survey results were compared on all of the 28 questions that were directly comparable (i.e. those questions that were unchanged between the three surveys, or for which response options could be matched up in a way that allowed them to be compared). Further comparisons were made between 5 questions asked only in 2004 and 2008. Z-tests were used for significance and all differences that are noted in this report are significant using $\alpha=0.05$. Bonferroni correction was used for all multiple comparisons (ie where data was available for all three years).

Questionnaire and method

The questionnaire was composed of closed questions except for a final section that invited respondents to comment in their own words on the aspects that were particularly good about their care, and the aspects that could be improved.

¹ Bullen N, Magee H and Reeves R. *Development and pilot testing of the NHS Acute Trust Emergency Department Survey 2003*, Picker Institute Europe, Oxford 2003.
http://www.nhssurveys.org/Filestore/documents/Emergency_dev_report.pdf

² Reeves R. *Preparation of core questionnaire for emergency department survey 2004*.
http://www.nhssurveys.org/Filestore/documents/Amendments_emergency_department_survey.pdf

³ Howell E. et al. *A report on the development of the questionnaire for the 2008 Emergency Department survey*, Picker Institute Europe, Oxford. 2008.
http://www.nhssurveys.org/Filestore/documents/ED08_Survey_development_report_v4.pdf

⁴ All acute NHS trusts in England that have an emergency department took part in the survey, including one specialist trust, Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, which has a large Emergency Department

Trusts were given the option of using an 'enhanced' questionnaire, where additional questions of local relevance could be added from a question bank of validated questions. Each trust had to include in their survey 50 core questions which covered issues that were found to be most important to patients. Data from the core questions are collated nationally and reported here. Trusts could select up to 38 additional questions from the online question bank tool.

Patients selected for the sample were sent a postal questionnaire and a covering letter. Up to two reminder letters were sent to non-respondents.

Calculation of trust-based national averages for responses to all questions

The weighted percentages presented in this report were calculated so that each trust had an equal influence on the final estimate. They therefore represent the results from the "average trust". If unweighted percentages had been used, the trusts' influence would not have been equal, since some trusts had a higher response rate than others and would therefore contribute more to any percentage calculated in this way. The effect of this would have been to skew the national averages towards the averages for the trusts with the greatest response rates.

This method ensures that all trusts had the same influence on the percentages, regardless of their response rate. That is, the proportion of responses to each response option for each individual question is calculated within each trust. The overall national percentage for a given response is then calculated as a mean of all the trusts' proportions.

This method provides a figure that represents every trust equally regardless of differential response rates.

The only exceptions to this approach were in the figures for demographics (sex, age, personal health evaluation, any disability and its effect on daily living, and ethnic group). These are given as simple percentages, as it is more appropriate to present the real percentages of sampled patients and respondents, rather than average figures.

Appendix 2: Who took part in the survey?

Questionnaires were sent to 128,383 patients¹ and completed questionnaires were received from 49,646 respondents. This represents an adjusted response rate of 39.9% when undelivered questionnaires, ineligible patients, and deceased patients have been accounted for (adjusted response rates varied between trusts from 26.1% to 52.1%).

This represents a decrease from the 2004 survey, which had an adjusted response rate of 43.5% (varying between trusts from 26.1% to 58.8%), following the downward trend in response rates from 45.7% in 2003.

Outcome of sending questionnaire

	Number	Percent
Returned useable questionnaire	49646	38.7
Returned undelivered or patient moved house	3234	2.5
Patient died	675	.5
Too ill, opted out or returned blank questionnaire	6300	4.9
Patient not eligible to fill in questionnaire	165	.1
Questionnaire not returned - reason not known	68383	53.3
Total	128403 ¹	100.0

Of all those patients who returned completed questionnaires:

- 55.1% were women
- 22.9% were aged 16-35 years, 21.8% 36-50 years, 23.1% were 51-65 years, 32.2% were 66 and over
- 91.4% were White, 4.1% Asian or Asian British, 2.8% Black or Black British, 1.1% were of mixed race, 0.6% were Chinese or from another ethnic group
- 63.8% said they have no problems in walking about, 83.7% have no problems with self-care, 59.0% have no problems with performing their usual activities, 47.7% have no pain or discomfort, and 71.1% said they are not anxious or depressed
- 47% described themselves as having at least one long-standing condition. The majority of these reported having a physical condition (23%) or a long-term illness (19%).
- Of those with a long-standing condition, 27% said that it does not cause them difficulty with activities. For those whose condition does cause them difficulties, over half (55%) said that this causes them “difficulty with everyday activities that people their age can usually do”, 23% said it causes them difficulty with “access to buildings, streets or transport vehicles” and 21% said it causes them difficulty with “communicating, mixing with others, or socialising”.

¹ There are 128,403 cases in the data file because 20 respondents removed their unique ID and so the response information could not be matched to the sample information

Demographics of respondents and non-respondents

It is important to compare the demographic characteristics of the respondents and non-respondents to the survey because respondents to a survey may not be representative of all patients that use a particular NHS trust. The sampling strategy is designed to approximate the population of patients at each participating NHS trust.

Gender and age

After patients who had died during the survey period, those who were ineligible, or whose questionnaires were returned undelivered were removed from the sample, completed questionnaires were received from 35.8% of male and 44.1% of female patients in the sample.

Older patients were more likely to respond than younger patients and useable questionnaires were returned by:

- 24.3% of 16 to 35 year olds
- 37.0% of 36 to 50 year olds
- 56.7% of 51 to 65 year olds
- 57.3% of patients aged 66 years or over.

The highest response rates were for female patients aged 51 to 65 (60.6%) and male patients aged 66 years or older (60.0%). The lowest response rates were for men aged 16 to 35 (18.9%) and women aged 16 to 35 (30.1%).

Ethnic group

Emergency departments recording of patients' ethnic group was available for 88.9% of the sample. Response rates varied by ethnic group and useable questionnaires were returned by:

- 41.5% of white patients
- 28.1% of patients of mixed ethnic groups
- 29.5% of Asian or Asian British patients
- 31.6% of Black or Black British patients
- 38.3% of Chinese patients
- 33.0% of patients reported to belong to "any other" ethnic group
- 38.6% of patients whose ethnic group was not stated in the sample information.

Appendix 3: Tables of results

Please note, due to rounding, the sum of some responses may not equal 100%.

Arrival at the Emergency Department

Q1 What was the MAIN reason that you went to the Emergency Department for?

	National average %	Number
1 I was told to go to an Emergency Department by a health professional (e.g. GP, nurse, NHS Direct)	24.1%	11361
2 I was taken to the Emergency Department by the Ambulance Service	26.5%	12419
3 My GP was not available or my local health centre was closed	5.3%	2428
4 I was not aware of any other service available at the time	.9%	392
5 I wanted a second opinion	1.1%	527
6 I decided that I needed to go to an Emergency Department	26.6%	12359
7 Somebody else (e.g. friend, relative, colleague) decided that I needed to go to an Emergency Department	15.5%	7314
Total specific responses		46800
Missing responses		2846

Answered by all

Q2 How did you travel to the hospital?

	National average %	Number
1 By car	52.7%	26073
2 In an ambulance	33.1%	16193
3 By taxi	5.2%	2410
4 On foot	2.8%	1303
5 On public transport	5.3%	2368
6 Other	1.0%	475
Total specific responses		48822
Missing responses		824

Answered by all

Q3 Was it possible to find a convenient place to park in the hospital car park?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes	73.7%	17695
2 No	26.3%	5539
Total specific responses		23234
3 I did not need to find a place to park		2316
4 Don't know		542
Missing responses		197

Answered by patients that travelled to hospital by car

Travelling by ambulance

Q4 Did the ambulance crew explain your treatment in a way you could understand?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	78.2%	11008
2 Yes, to some extent	17.6%	2496
3 No	4.2%	585
Total specific responses		14089
4 Don't know / Can't remember		1637
Missing responses		732

Answered by patients that travelled to hospital in an ambulance

Q5 Overall, how would you rate the care you received from the ambulance service?

	National average %	Number
1 Excellent	68.8%	10908
2 Very good	21.5%	3365
3 Good	6.5%	990
4 Fair	2.1%	321
5 Poor	.7%	98
6 Very poor	.4%	62
Total specific responses		15744
Missing responses		720

Answered by patients that travelled to hospital in an ambulance

Reception

Q6 Were you given enough privacy when discussing your condition with the receptionist?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	41.2%	15334
2 Yes, to some extent	43.5%	16171
3 No	15.3%	5575
Total specific responses		37080
4 I did not discuss my condition with a receptionist		11271
Missing responses		1295

Answered by all

Waiting

Q7 How long did you wait before you first spoke to a nurse or doctor?

	National average %	Number
1 0 -15 minutes	40.2%	18797
2 16-30 minutes	30.6%	14129
3 31-60 minutes	16.5%	7596
4 More than 60 minutes	12.7%	5803
Total specific responses		46325
5 Don't know / Can't remember		2544
Missing responses		777

Answered by all

Q8 From the time you first arrived at the Emergency Department, how long did you wait before being examined by a doctor or nurse?

	National average %	Number
1 I did not have to wait	14.6%	6857
2 1 - 30 minutes	36.2%	16945
3 31 - 60 minutes	22.4%	10404
4 More than 1 hour but no more than 2 hours	14.7%	6822
5 More than 2 hours but no more than 4 hours	9.7%	4477
6 More than 4 hours	2.5%	1114
Total specific responses		46619
7 Can't remember		1671
8 I did not see a doctor or nurse		235
Missing responses		1121

Answered by all

Q9 Were you told how long you would have to wait to be examined?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, but the wait was shorter	15.1%	5541
2 Yes, and I had to wait about as long as I was told	18.0%	6616
3 Yes, but the wait was longer	11.3%	4099
4 No, I was not told	55.6%	20399
Total specific responses		36655
5 Don't know / Can't remember		4815
Missing responses		604

Answered by all patients who had to wait to see a doctor or a nurse

Q10 Overall, how long did your visit to the Emergency Department last?

	National average %	Number
1 Up to 1 hour	15.1%	6976
2 More than 1 hour but no more than 2 hours	23.7%	10968
3 More than 2 hours but no more than 4 hours	34.3%	15882
4 More than 4 hours but no more than 8 hours	19.1%	8765
5 More than 8 hours but no more than 12 hours	2.9%	1316
6 More than 12 hours but no more than 24 hours	2.2%	1010
7 More than 24 hours	2.7%	1223
Total specific responses		46140
8 Can't remember		2100
Missing responses		1406

Answered by all

Doctors and nurses

Q11 Did you have enough time to discuss your health or medical problem with the doctor or nurse?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	69.1%	33387
2 Yes, to some extent	26.0%	12473
3 No	4.8%	2281
Total specific responses		48141
4 I did not see a doctor or a nurse		342
Missing responses		1163

Answered by all

Q12 While you were in the Emergency Department, did a doctor or nurse explain your condition and treatment in a way you could understand?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, completely	66.9%	31012
2 Yes, to some extent	26.5%	12207
3 No	6.6%	3030
Total specific responses		46249
4 I did not need an explanation		2053
Missing responses		373

Answered by patients who saw a doctor or a nurse

Q13 Did the doctors and nurses listen to what you had to say?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	75.6%	36498
2 Yes, to some extent	21.1%	10135
3 No	3.3%	1576
Total specific responses		48209
Missing responses		421

Answered by patients who saw a doctor or a nurse

Q14 If you had any anxieties or fears about your condition or treatment, did a doctor or nurse discuss them with you?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, completely	53.3%	17620
2 Yes, to some extent	31.5%	10366
3 No	15.2%	4931
Total specific responses		32917
4 I did not have anxieties or fears		15055
Missing responses		676

Answered by patients who saw a doctor or a nurse

Q15 Did you have confidence and trust in the doctors treating you?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	73.0%	35487
2 Yes, to some extent	22.2%	10689
3 No	4.8%	2315
Total specific responses		48491
Missing responses		356

Answered by patients who saw a doctor or a nurse

Q16 Did doctors or nurses talk in front of you as if you weren't there?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	5.9%	2740
2 Yes, to some extent	10.6%	5064
3 No	83.5%	40238
Total specific responses		48042
Missing responses		847

Answered by patients who saw a doctor or a nurse

Your care and treatment

Q17 While you were in the Emergency Department, how much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?

	National average %	Number
1 Not enough	14.8%	7084
2 Right amount	77.4%	37365
3 Too much	.5%	210
4 Not given any information about my treatment or condition	7.3%	3506
Total specific responses		48165
Missing responses		1481

Answered by all

Q18 Were you given enough privacy when being examined or treated?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	78.8%	38396
2 Yes, to some extent	18.4%	8902
3 No	2.8%	1353
Total specific responses		48651
Missing responses		995

Answered by all

Q19 If you needed attention, were you able to get a member of staff to help you?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, always	54.7%	18249
2 Yes, sometimes	34.8%	11524
3 No, I could not find a member of staff to help me	8.0%	2626
4 A member of staff was with me all the time	2.5%	848
Total specific responses		33247
5 I did not need attention		15082
Missing responses		1317

Answered by all

Q20 Sometimes in a hospital, a member of staff will say one thing and another will say something quite different. Did this happen to you in the Emergency Department?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	6.3%	3015
2 Yes, to some extent	10.9%	5215
3 No	82.8%	40219
Total specific responses		48449
Missing responses		1197

Answered by all

Q21 Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	61.7%	28082
2 Yes, to some extent	28.4%	12753
3 No	9.8%	4375
Total specific responses		45210
4 Not well enough to be involved in decisions about care		2960
Missing responses		1476

Answered by all

Tests

Q22 Did you have any tests (such as x-rays, scans or blood tests) when you visited the Emergency Department?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes	67.1%	32332
2 No	32.9%	15925
Total specific responses		48257
Missing responses		1389

Answered by all

Q23 Did a member of staff explain the results of the tests in a way you could understand?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	62.3%	18104
2 Yes, to some extent	24.6%	7107
3 No	8.5%	2445
6 I was never told the results of the tests	4.6%	1334
Total specific responses		28990
4 Not sure / Can't remember		1591
5 I was told that the results would be given at a later date		1470
Missing responses		705

Answered by patients who had tests when they visited the Emergency Department

Pain

Q24 Were you in any pain while you were in the Emergency Department?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes	65.7%	31669
2 No	34.3%	16709
Total specific responses		48378
Missing responses		1268

Answered by all

Q25 Did you request pain relief medication?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes	34.6%	7886
2 No	65.4%	15075
Total specific responses		22961
3 I was offered or given pain relief medication without asking		8417
Missing responses		647

Answered by patients who experienced pain whilst they were in the Emergency Department

Q26 How many minutes after you requested pain relief medication did it take before you got it?

	National average %	Number
1 0 minutes / right away	16.4%	1280
2 1 - 5 minutes	22.4%	1787
3 6 - 10 minutes	16.6%	1315
4 11 - 15 minutes	10.8%	865
5 16 - 30 minutes	11.6%	935
6 More than 30 minutes	13.4%	1064
7 I asked for pain relief medication but wasn't given any	8.8%	695
Total specific responses		7941
Missing responses		267

Answered by patients who requested pain relief medication whilst they were in the Emergency Department

Q27 Do you think the hospital staff did everything they could to help control your pain?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	59.0%	16493
2 Yes, to some extent	26.7%	7334
3 No	14.3%	3888
Total specific responses		27715
4 Can't say / Don't know		2636
Missing responses		1779

Answered by patients who experienced pain whilst they were in the Emergency Department

Hospital environment and facilities

Q28 In your opinion, how clean was the Emergency Department?

	National average %	Number
1 Very clean	44.0%	20740
2 Fairly clean	47.2%	21893
3 Not very clean	6.9%	3090
4 Not at all clean	1.9%	864
Total specific responses		46587
5 Can't say		2328
Missing responses		731

Answered by all

Q29 How clean were the toilets in the Emergency Department?

	National average %	Number
1 Very clean	38.1%	9916
2 Fairly clean	45.5%	11856
3 Not very clean	11.7%	3067
4 Not at all clean	4.6%	1212
Total specific responses		26051
5 I did not use a toilet		22655
Missing responses		940

Answered by all

Q30 While you were in the Emergency Department, did you feel bothered or threatened by other patients?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	2.5%	1170
2 Yes, to some extent	7.5%	3562
3 No	89.9%	44051
Total specific responses		48783
Missing responses		863

Answered by all

Leaving the emergency department

Q31 What happened at the end of your visit to the Emergency Department?

	National average %	Number
1 I was admitted to the same hospital	27.4%	13422
2 I was transferred to a different hospital or to a nursing home	2.3%	1083
3 I went home	66.8%	32418
4 I went to stay with a friend or relative	2.5%	1228
5 I went to stay somewhere else	1.0%	516
Total specific responses		48667
Missing responses		979

Answered by all

Medications

Q32 Before you left the Emergency Department, were any new medications prescribed for you?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes	35.8%	12145
2 No	64.2%	21969
Total specific responses		34114
Missing responses		468

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department

Q33 Did a member of staff explain the purpose of the medicines you were to take at home in a way you could understand?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, completely	83.9%	9829
2 Yes, to some extent	12.6%	1477
3 No	3.5%	415
Total specific responses		11721
4 I did not need an explanation		535
Missing responses		100

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department and were prescribed new medication

Q34 Did a member of staff tell you about medication side effects to watch for?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, completely	37.4%	3611
2 Yes, to some extent	17.5%	1700
3 No	45.1%	4381
Total specific responses		9692
4 I did not need this type of information		2579
Missing responses		250

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department and were prescribed new medication

Information

Q35 Did a member of staff tell you when you could resume your usual activities, such as when to go back to work or drive a car?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, definitely	36.8%	7663
2 Yes, to some extent	22.7%	4666
3 No	40.5%	8195
Total specific responses		20524
4 I did not need this type of information		13312
Missing responses		905

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department

Q36 Did a member of staff tell you what danger signals regarding your illness or treatment to watch for after you went home?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, completely	40.5%	8710
2 Yes, to some extent	24.6%	5223
3 No	34.9%	7393
Total specific responses		21326
4 I did not need this type of information		12635
Missing responses		788

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department

Q37 Did hospital staff tell you who to contact if you were worried about your condition or treatment after you left the Emergency Department?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes	67.7%	20298
2 No	32.3%	9572
Total specific responses		29870
3 Don't know / Can't remember		3870
Missing responses		1074

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department

Overall

Q38 Was the main reason you went to the Emergency Department dealt with to your satisfaction?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, completely	67.1%	32847
2 Yes, to some extent	25.1%	12072
3 No	7.7%	3692
Total specific responses		48611
Missing responses		1035

Answered by all

Q39 Overall, did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the Emergency Department?

	National average %	Number
1 Yes, all of the time	78.2%	38223
2 Yes, sometimes	17.9%	8542
3 No	3.9%	1892
Total specific responses		48657
Missing responses		989

Answered by all

Q40 Overall, how would you rate the care you received in the Emergency Department?

	National average %	Number
1 Excellent	34.9%	17221
2 Very good	36.3%	17689
3 Good	16.8%	8040
4 Fair	7.5%	3567
5 Poor	2.8%	1347
6 Very poor	1.6%	771
Total specific responses		48635
Missing responses		1011

Answered by all

About you

Q41 Proportions of those participating to the survey by sex

	Percentage	Total
1 Male	44.9%	22292
2 Female	55.1%	27353
Total specific responses		49645
Missing data		1

Answered by all - data taken from response but if missing taken from sample data

Q42 Proportions of those participating to the survey by age group

	Percentage	Total
1 16-35	22.9%	11362
2 36-50	21.8%	10825
3 51-65	23.1%	11455
4 >65	32.2%	16003
Total specific responses		49645
Missing data		1

Answered by all - data taken from response but if missing taken from sample data

Q43 Mobility

	Percentage	Number
1 I have no problems in walking about	63.8%	30653
2 I have some problems in walking about	35.4%	17011
3 I am confined to bed	.7%	350
Total specific responses		48014
Missing responses		1632

Answered by all

Q44 Self-Care

	Percentage	Number
1 I have no problems with self-care	83.7%	39941
2 I have some problems washing or dressing myself	14.2%	6793
3 I am unable to wash or dress myself	2.0%	965
Total specific responses		47699
Missing responses		1947

Answered by all

Q45 Usual Activities

	Percentage	Number
1 I have no problems with performing my usual activities	59.0%	28264
2 I have some problems with performing my usual activities	33.0%	15803
3 I am unable to perform my usual activities	7.9%	3799
Total specific responses		47866
Missing responses		1780

Answered by all

Q46 Pain / Discomfort

	Percentage	Number
1 I have no pain or discomfort	47.7%	22697
2 I have moderate pain or discomfort	44.9%	21359
3 I have extreme pain or discomfort	7.4%	3546
Total specific responses		47602
Missing responses		2044

Answered by all

Q47 Anxiety / Depression

	Percentage	Number
1 I am not anxious or depressed	71.1%	33592
2 I am moderately anxious or depressed	24.4%	11541
3 I am extremely anxious or depressed	4.4%	2100
Total specific responses		47233
Missing responses		2413

Answered by all

Q48. Do you have any of the following long-standing conditions?

	Number	% (Base: Respondents)	% (Base: Responses)
Q48_1 I have a long-standing condition involving deafness or hearing impairment	4511	10%	9%
Q48_2 I have a long-standing condition involving blindness or partially sighted	1788	4%	3%
Q48_3 I have a long-standing condition involving a physical condition	10305	23%	19%
Q48_4 I have a long-standing condition involving a learning disability	928	2%	2%
Q48_5 I have a long-standing condition involving a mental health condition	2581	6%	5%
Q48_6 I have a long-standing condition involving an illness such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, CHD, or epilepsy	8561	19%	16%
Q48_7 I do not have a long-standing condition	24372	53%	46%
Total	45642	116%	100%
Missing responses	4004		

Answered by all

Q49. Does this condition(s) cause you difficulty with any of the following?

	Number	% (Base: Respondents)	% (Base: Responses)
Q49_1 This condition causes me difficulty with everyday activities that people of my age can usually do	11779	55%	29%
Q49_2 This condition causes me difficulty at work, in education, or training	3981	18%	10%
Q49_3 This condition causes me difficulty with access to buildings, streets, or transport vehicles	5063	23%	13%
Q49_4 This condition causes me difficulty with reading or writing	2993	14%	7%
Q49_5 This condition causes me difficulty with people's attitudes to me because of my condition	3005	14%	7%
Q49_6 This condition causes me difficulty with communicating, mixing with others, or socialising	4579	21%	11%
Q49_7 This condition causes me difficulty with other activities	3227	15%	8%
Q49_8 This condition does not cause me difficulty with any of these	5829	27%	14%
Total	21547	188%	100%
Missing responses	947		

Answered by those with a long-standing condition

Q50 Proportions of those participating to the survey by ethnic group

	Percentage	Total
1 White	91.4%	45123
2 Mixed	1.1%	529
3 Asian or Asian British	4.1%	2017
4 Black or Black British	2.8%	1373
5 Chinese or Other	.6%	314
Ethnic Group		
Total specific responses		49356
Missing data		290

Answered by all - data taken from response but if missing taken from sample data

Appendix 4: Comparison tables for respondents - 2003, 2004 and 2008 results

Notes on significance between years

National surveys of emergency departments have been carried out in 2003, 2004, and 2008. Of the 40 questions asked in the 2008 emergency department survey (not including the 10 demographic questions), 33 could be compared with results from the 2004 survey and 28 with results from the 2003 emergency department survey.

We carried out statistical tests on the data to determine whether there had been any 'statistically significant' changes in the results for 2008 compared with other years. A statistically significant difference means that the change in the results is very unlikely to have occurred by chance¹.

The final two columns of the tables use 'up' and 'down' arrows to indicate whether there has been a 'statistically significant' change between 2008 and 2004 (the last time the survey was carried out), and also between 2008 and 2003 (when the first survey was carried out):

↑ shows that there has been a statistically significant **increase** in results

↓ shows that there has been a statistically significant **decrease** in results.

Where a cell in the final two columns is blank, there has been no statistically significant change.

Q2 How did you travel to the hospital?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
By car	54%	57%	53%	↓	↓
In an ambulance	31%	28%	33%	↑	↑
By taxi	6%	6%	5%		↓
On foot	3%	3%	3%	↓	↓
On public transport	5%	5%	5%		↑
Other	1%	1%	1%		
Total specific responses	58190	54234	48822		

Answered by all

¹ We used z-tests of the column proportions using the Bonferroni method correcting for multiple comparisons only (for questions with three years of comparable data).

Q7 How long did you wait before you first spoke to a nurse or doctor?

	Survey Year		Significant change between 04 and 08
	2004	2008	
0 -15 minutes	47%	40%	↓
16-30 minutes	29%	31%	↑
31-60 minutes	14%	16%	↑
More than 60 minutes	10%	13%	↑
Total specific responses	52465	46325	

Answered by all

Q8 From the time you first arrived at the Emergency Department, how long did you wait before being examined by a doctor or a nurse?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
I did not have to wait	15%	16%	15%	↓	
1 - 30 minutes	33%	38%	36%	↓	↑
31 - 60 minutes	18%	21%	22%	↑	↑
More than 1 hour but no more than 2 hours	14%	13%	15%	↑	↑
More than 2 hours but no more than 4 hours	13%	9%	10%		↓
More than 4 hours	7%	3%	2%	↓	↓
Total specific responses	55606	52239	46619		

Answered by all

Q8_v2 From the time you first arrived at the Emergency Department, how long did you wait before being examined by a doctor or a nurse?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
0-60 minutes	66%	74%	73%	↓	↑
More than 60 minutes	34%	26%	27%	↑	↓
Total specific responses	55606	52239	46619		

Answered by all

Q9 Were you told how long you would have to wait to be examined?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, but the wait was shorter	13%	16%	15%	↓	↑
Yes, and I had to wait about as long as I was told	16%	18%	18%		↑
Yes, but the wait was longer	13%	10%	11%	↑	↓
No, I was not told	58%	56%	56%		↓
Total specific responses	43989	40497	36655		

Answered by all patients who had to wait to see a doctor or a nurse

Q10 Overall, how long did your visit to the Emergency Department last?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Up to 1 hour	17%	19%	15%	↓	↓
More than 1 hour but no more than 2 hours	21%	26%	24%	↓	↑
More than 2 hours but no more than 4 hours	31%	32%	34%	↑	↑
More than 4 hours but no more than 8 hours	22%	18%	19%	↑	↓
More than 8 hours but no more than 12 hours	5%	3%	3%	↑	↓
More than 12 hours but no more than 24 hours	2%	1%	2%	↑	↓
More than 24 hours	2%	2%	3%	↑	↑
Total specific responses	55053	51677	46140		

Answered by all

Q10_v2 Overall, how long did your visit to the Emergency Department last?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Up to 4 hours	68%	77%	73%	↓	↑
More than 4 hours	32%	23%	27%	↑	↓
Total specific responses	55053	51677	46140		

Answered by all

Q11 Did you have enough time to discuss your health or medical problem with the doctor or nurse?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, definitely	62%	66%	69%	↑	↑
Yes, to some extent	30%	27%	26%	↓	↓
No	8%	6%	5%	↓	↓
Total specific responses	56560	53399	48141		

Answered by all

Q12 While you were in the Emergency Department, did a doctor or nurse explain your condition and treatment in a way you could understand?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, completely	65%	67%	67%		↑
Yes, to some extent	27%	26%	27%		
No	8%	7%	7%		↓
Total specific responses	53959	50979	46249		

Answered by patients who saw a doctor or a nurse

Q13 Did the doctors and nurses listen to what you had to say?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, definitely	73%	74%	76%	↑	↑
Yes, to some extent	23%	23%	21%	↓	↓
No	4%	3%	3%		↓
Total specific responses	56813	53154	48209		

Answered by patients who saw a doctor or a nurse

Q14 If you had any anxieties or fears about your condition or treatment, did a doctor or nurse discuss them with you?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, completely	49%	51%	53%	↑	↑
Yes, to some extent	31%	32%	32%		
No	19%	16%	15%	↓	↓
Total specific responses	34870	34261	32917		

Answered by patients who saw a doctor or a nurse

Q15 Did you have confidence and trust in the doctors and nurses examining and treating you?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, definitely	73%	73%	73%		
Yes, to some extent	22%	22%	22%		
No	5%	5%	5%		
Total specific responses	57251	53284	48491		

Answered by patients who saw a doctor or a nurse

Q16 Did doctors or nurses talk in front of you as if you weren't there?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, definitely	6%	6%	6%		
Yes, to some extent	11%	11%	11%		
No	84%	84%	83%		
Total specific responses	56772	53049	48042		

Answered by patients who saw a doctor or a nurse

Q17 While you were in the Emergency Department, how much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Not enough	16%	15%	15%		↓
Right amount	75%	77%	77%		↑
Too much	0%	0%	0%		
Not given any information about my treatment or condition	9%	7%	7%		↓
Total specific responses	56847	53512	48165		

Answered by all

Q18 Were you given enough privacy when being examined or treated?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, definitely	78%	80%	79%	↓	↑
Yes, to some extent	19%	17%	18%	↑	
No	3%	3%	3%		↓
Total specific responses	57322	54125	48651		

Answered by all

Q19 If you needed attention, were you able to get a member of staff to help you?

	Survey Year		Significant change between 04 and 08
	2004	2008	
Yes, always	57%	55%	↓
Yes, sometimes	33%	35%	↑
No, I could not find a member of staff to help me	7%	8%	↑
A member of staff was with me all the time	3%	3%	↓
Total specific responses	35760	33247	

Answered by all

Q20 Sometimes in a hospital, a member of staff will say one thing and another will say something quite different. Did this happen to you in the Emergency Department?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, definitely	7%	6%	6%		
Yes, to some extent	10%	10%	11%	↑	↑
No	84%	84%	83%	↓	↓
Total specific responses	57350	54150	48449		

Answered by all

Q21 Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, definitely	63%	64%	62%	↓	↓
Yes, to some extent	27%	27%	28%	↑	↑
No	10%	9%	10%	↑	
Total specific responses	53228	50808	45210		

Answered by all

Q22 Did you have any tests (such as x-rays, scans or blood tests) when you visited the Emergency Department?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes	56%	62%	67%	↑	↑
No	44%	38%	33%	↓	↓
Total specific responses	57331	53929	48257		

Answered by all

Q23 Did a member of staff explain the results of the tests in a way you could understand?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, definitely	63%	62%	62%		
Yes, to some extent	24%	24%	25%		
No	10%	9%	8%		↓
I was never told the results of the tests	3%	5%	5%		↑
Total specific responses	29397	30281	28990		

Answered by patients who had tests when they visited the Emergency Department

Q24 Were you in any pain while you were in the Emergency Department?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes	70%	69%	66%	↓	↓
No	30%	31%	34%	↑	↑
Total specific responses	57405	53859	48378		

Answered by all

Q27 Do you think the hospital staff did everything they could to help control your pain?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, definitely	55%	56%	59%	↑	↑
Yes, to some extent	27%	28%	27%	↓	
No	18%	16%	14%	↓	↓
Total specific responses	34510	32249	27715		

Answered by patients who experienced pain whilst they were in the Emergency Department

Q28 In your opinion, how clean was the Emergency Department?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Very clean	48%	45%	44%		↓
Fairly clean	43%	46%	47%	↑	↑
Not very clean	7%	7%	7%		
Not at all clean	2%	2%	2%		
Total specific responses	55384	51675	46587		

Answered by all

Q29 How clean were the toilets in the Emergency Department?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Very clean	43%	39%	38%		↓
Fairly clean	42%	45%	46%		↑
Not very clean	10%	12%	12%		↑
Not at all clean	5%	5%	5%		
Total specific responses	30582	27516	26051		

Answered by all

Q30 While you were in the Emergency Department, did you feel bothered or threatened by other patients?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, definitely	3%	2%	3%	↑	↓
Yes, to some extent	8%	7%	8%		↓
No	89%	91%	90%	↓	↑
Total specific responses	57593	54192	48783		

Answered by all

Q31 What happened at the end of your visit to the Emergency Department?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
I was admitted to the same hospital	24%	23%	27%	↑	↑
I was transferred to a different hospital or to a nursing home	2%	2%	2%	↑	↑
I went home	70%	71%	67%	↓	↓
I went to stay with a friend or relative	3%	2%	3%		↓
I went to stay somewhere else	1%	2%	1%	↓	
Total specific responses	57625	53854	48667		

Answered by all

Q32 Before you left the Emergency Department, were any new medications prescribed for you?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes	37%	38%	36%	↓	↓
No	63%	62%	64%	↑	↑
Total specific responses	41532	39965	34114		

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department

Q33 Did a member of staff explain the purpose of the medicines you were to take at home in a way you could understand?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, completely	82%	81%	84%	↑	↑
Yes, to some extent	13%	14%	13%	↓	
No	5%	5%	4%	↓	↓
Total specific responses	14271	14021	11721		

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department and were prescribed new medication

Q34 Did a member of staff tell you about medication side effects to watch for when you went home?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, completely	35%	36%	37%	↑	↑
Yes, to some extent	14%	16%	17%	↑	↑
No	51%	49%	45%	↓	↓
Total specific responses	11599	11211	9692		

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department and were prescribed new medication

Q35 Did a member of staff tell you when you could resume your usual activities, such as when to go back to work or drive a car?

	Survey Year		Significant change between 04 and 08
	2004	2008	
Yes, definitely	35%	37%	↑
Yes, to some extent	22%	23%	
No	42%	41%	↓
Total specific responses	24014	20524	

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department

Q36 Did a member of staff tell you what danger signals regarding your illness or treatment to watch for after you went home?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, completely	40%	39%	40%	↑	
Yes, to some extent	23%	24%	25%	↑	↑
No	37%	37%	35%	↓	↓
Total specific responses	25800	23425	21326		

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department

Q37 Did hospital staff tell you who to contact if you were worried about your condition or treatment after you left the Emergency Department?

	Survey Year		Significant change between 04 and 08
	2004	2008	
Yes	66%	68%	↑
No	34%	32%	↓
Total specific responses	35009	29870	

Answered by patients who were NOT admitted to hospital at the end of their visit to the Emergency Department

Q38 Was the main reason you went to the Emergency Department dealt with to your satisfaction?

	Survey Year		Significant change between 04 and 08
	2004	2008	
Yes, completely	68%	67%	↓
Yes, to some extent	25%	25%	
No	8%	8%	
Total specific responses	53907	48611	

Answered by all

Q39 Overall, did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the Emergency Department?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Yes, all of the time	77%	79%	78%	↓	↑
Yes, sometimes	18%	17%	18%		
No	5%	4%	4%		↓
Total specific responses	57596	54079	48657		

Answered by all

Q40 Overall, how would you rate the care you received in the Emergency Department?

	Survey Year			Significant change between 04 and 08	Significant change between 03 and 08
	2003	2004	2008		
Excellent	31%	34%	35%	↑	↑
Very good	35%	36%	36%		↑
Good	19%	18%	17%	↓	↓
Fair	9%	8%	7%		↓
Poor	3%	3%	3%		↓
Very poor	2%	2%	2%		↓
Total specific responses	57710	54078	48635		

Answered by all