

Preparation of core questionnaire for Emergency Department survey 2004/05

1 Introduction

The Emergency Department survey was carried out in 155 acute and specialist hospital trusts in England in 2003. The average response rate was 46%. The survey results were used locally in quality improvement programmes and in the 2003 performance indicators (PI) and star ratings. This document describes some of the alterations that have been made to the core questionnaire and question bank in order to prepare for the 2004/05 survey.

2 Aims

The aims of this exercise are:

- Where possible, to keep the same questions as were included in the 2003 questionnaire. This will facilitate year-on-year comparisons.
- To remove some questions from the core questionnaire that were not useful for performance indicators or quality improvement purposes. Almost all questions that are removed from the core questionnaire will be retained for optional use in the question bank.
- To include some questions from the question bank that were omitted from the 2003 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.

- Picker Institute Europe carried out the surveys for 91 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 2003 to see if they should be included in the 2004/05 core questionnaire.
- The inclusion of questions in the 2003 performance indicators, and the Department of Health's Public Service Agreement targets were taken into account.
- The Emergency Department importance study carried out in 2002, in which recent users of the Emergency Department were asked to rate 49 issues in order of importance to them.
- We contacted all lead contacts in NHS trusts that carried out the Emergency Department survey in 2002/03 by email and asked them to feed back any comments on the questionnaire.

4 Questions removed from the core questionnaire

In this section, unless otherwise stated, question numbers refer to the Emergency Department core questionnaire 2002/03 Version 14.

A number of questions that were not found to be very useful for quality improvement purposes, or were not included in the 2003/03 performance indicators have been removed. Almost all questions removed from the core questionnaire will be retained for use in the question bank.

B2. Were you told what priority level you had been given?

This question was removed because:

- Policy changes have meant a move to a "see and treat" approach in Emergency Departments so priority levels are not given in many trusts.
- It was not used in PIs in 2003 survey.

* * *

C4. Did you think that doctors or nurses were deliberately not telling you certain things that you wanted to know?

This question was removed because:

- There was criticism that it was a somewhat leading question.
- It was not used in PIs in 2003 survey.
- It had a fairly high number of missing responses (5.6%).

* * *

D1. Do you need any help in understanding English?

This question was removed because:

- It was felt that this question came too late in the questionnaire to be of use to those whose understanding of English was poor.
- Only a few participants (2.2%) said they needed help in understanding English.

* * *

D2. When you were in the Emergency Department, was there someone who could interpret for you?

This question was removed because:

- Few participants said that they needed help.
- It was not used in PIs in 2003 survey.

* * *

E2. How long did you wait for your tests to be carried out?

This question was removed because:

- It was not very important to patients
- It was not used in PIs in 2003 survey.

* * *

5 Minor changes to existing questions in core questionnaire

In this section, question numbers refer to new Emergency Department questionnaire 2004/5 Version 6.

* * *

The 2002/03 questionnaire included the following question:

Following your arrival in the Emergency Department, how long did you wait for a nurse to assess your priority (i.e. how long did you wait to see a triage nurse)?

- 1 I did not have to wait to be assessed
- 2 1 - 15 minutes
- 3 16 - 30 minutes
- 4 31 – 60 minutes
- 5 More than 60 minutes
- 6 Don't know/ Can't remember
- 7 I left before I was assessed

The question wording has been modified to reflect the change from triage to the “see and treat” approach that is now carried out in many trusts. Also, the response options have been changed so that the first category is 0-15 minutes, since trusts had commented that many patients would not consider that they had waited a significant length of time if they waited 1-15 minutes. The response category “I left before I was assessed” was removed as only a very small percentage (0.2%) ticked this option. The question now reads as follows:

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

- 1 0 -15 minutes
- 2 16 - 30 minutes
- 3 31- 60 minutes
- 4 More than 60 minutes
- 5 Don't know/ Can't remember

* * *

The 2002/03 questionnaire included the following question:

Overall, did you think the patient priority system was fair?

The wording has now been changed to:

4. Overall, did you think the order in which patients were seen was fair?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Can't say/ Don't know

The reason for this change is that the new question fits better with the “see and treat” approach, and this wording is easier to understand.

* * *

The 2002/03 questionnaire included the following question:

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

The question wording has now been changed to:

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

The reason for this change is that trust feedback indicates that blood tests are good examples of tests that patients may undergo in the Emergency Department.

* * *

The 2002/03 questionnaire included the following question:

Did hospital staff tell you who to contact after you got home if you were worried about your condition or treatment?

- 1 Yes, they told me to contact **my GP**
- 2 Yes, they told me to contact the **practice nurse** at my local health centre
- 3 Yes, they told me to contact **NHS Direct**
- 4 Yes, I was told to **dial 999**
- 5 Yes, they told me to return to the **hospital**
- 6 Yes, I was told to contact **someone else**
- 7 No, I was not told who to contact
- 8 I did not need this type of information
- 9 Don't know/ Can't remember

The question has now changed to:

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

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know/ Can't remember

This change now matches the wording in the inpatient survey. Also, the original question allowed respondents to state who they had been told to contact (GP/ 999 /the hospital /someone else, etc), but 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 knew who to contact, rather than which body they had been asked to contact in particular situations, so the response options were collapsed.

* * *

The 2002/03 questionnaire included the following question, with categorical response options:

How old are you?

The question has been changed to:

44. What was your year of birth?

The reason for the change was that it offered a more precise assessment of the patient's age.

6 Minor changes to questions now in question bank

In this section, question numbers refer to the Emergency Department core questionnaire 2002/03 Version 14. (These questions were previously in the core questionnaire but are now in the question bank only.)

* * *

B2. Were you told what priority level you had been given?

The response options for this question were reduced because trusts said it was useful to know whether patients were aware of their priority level, rather than which priority level patients were.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, I was not given a priority level
- 3 Don't know/ Can't remember

* * *

D1. When you were in the Emergency Department, was there someone who could interpret for you?

An extra response category was added to this question because trust feedback indicated that telephone interpreters were used in many cases.

- 1 Yes, a relative or friend
- 2 Yes, an interpreter from the hospital
- 3 Yes, someone else on the hospital staff
- 4 Yes, a telephone interpreter
- 5 No

* * *

7 Questions added from question bank

In this section, question numbers refer to new Emergency Department core questionnaire 2004/5 Version 6.

The following questions were added because feedback from trusts indicated that they provided them with valuable and actionable information for quality improvement programmes.

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

21. Did the staff treating and assessing you introduce themselves?

34. Did a member of staff explain to you how to take the new medications?

37. 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?

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

8 New questions added

A new question was added about the reception in the Emergency Department following feedback from trusts that this is an important area and should be assessed in the survey.

2. How would you rate the courtesy of the Emergency Department receptionist?

- 1 Excellent
- 2 Very good
- 3 Good
- 4 Fair
- 5 Poor
- 6 Very poor
- 7 I did not see a receptionist

* * *

Two new questions were added on disability:

47. Do you have a long-standing physical or mental health problem or disability?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

48. Does this problem or disability affect your day-to-day activities?

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

9 Question Removed

The following question was removed from both the core and question bank because:

- It was not very important to patients
- It was not used in PIs in 2003 survey.
- Patients have been confused about when the start time for their wait was
- This question upset the flow of the questionnaire.

H1. How long did you wait to get to your room or ward and bed?

- 1 Up to 1 hour
- 2 More than 1 hour but no more than 2 hours
- 3 More than 2 hours but no more than 4 hours
- 4 More than 4 hours but no more than 8 hours
- 5 More than 8 hours but no more than 12 hours
- 6 More than 12 hours but no more than 24 hours
- 7 More than 24 hours
- 8 Can't remember

10 Item non-response for questions included in the new 2005 survey

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

Most of these figures are based on responses to the core questions used in the 2003 national Emergency Department survey. Where a question was not included in the core questionnaire, the Picker 12-page survey data has been used.

Question	% missing responses (of those eligible to respond)
1. How did you travel to the hospital?	2.8
2. How would you rate the courtesy of the Emergency Department receptionist?	New question
3. How long did you wait before you first spoke to a nurse or doctor?	2.3 (wording changed)
4. Overall, did you think the order in which patients were seen was fair?	3.9 (wording changed)
5. From the time you first arrived at the Emergency Department, how long did you wait before being examined by a doctor or nurse practitioner?	3.2 (wording changed)
6. Were you told how long you would have to wait to be examined?	2.3
7. Overall how long did your visit to the Emergency Department last?	4.5
8. Did you have enough time to discuss your health or medical problem with the doctor or nurse?	4.3
9. While you were in the Emergency Department, did a doctor or nurse explain your condition and treatment in a way you could understand?	1.4
10. Did the doctors and nurses listen to what you had to say?	1.6
11. If you had any anxieties or fears about your condition or treatment, did a doctor or nurse discuss them with you?	2.1
12. Did you have confidence and trust in the doctors and nurses examining and treating you?	1.2
13. In your opinion, did the doctors and nurses in the Emergency Department know enough about your condition or treatment?	1.8
14. Did doctors or nurses talk in front of you as if you weren't there?	2.0
15. While you were in the Emergency Department, how much information about your condition or	5.0

Question	% missing responses (of those eligible to respond)
treatment was given to you?	
16. Were you given enough privacy when discussing your condition or treatment?	4.2
17. Were you given enough privacy when being examined or treated?	4.2
18. If you needed attention, were you able to get a member of staff to help you?	3.8
19. 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?	4.2
20. Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions made about your care and treatment?	1.5
21. Did the staff treating and assessing you introduce themselves?	3.1
22. Did you have any tests (such as x-rays, scans or blood tests) when you visited the Emergency Department?	4.2
23. Did a member of staff explain the results of the tests in a way you could understand?	3.2
24. Were you in any pain while you were in the Emergency Department?	4.0
25. While you were in the Emergency Department, how much of the time were you in pain?	1.5
26. Did you request pain medicine?	2.8
27. How many minutes after you requested pain medicine did it take before you got it?	3.1
28. Do you think the hospital staff did everything they could to help control your pain?	6.3
29. In your opinion, how clean was the Emergency Department?	2.3
30. How clean were the toilets in the Emergency Department?	2.7
31. While you were in the Emergency Department, did you feel bothered or threatened by other patients?	2.9
32. What happened at the end of your visit to the Emergency Department?	3.7
33. Before you left the Emergency Department, were any new medications prescribed or ordered for you?	3.8
34. Did a member of staff explain to you how to take the new medications?	2.0 (from outpatients 2003 data)
35. Did a member of staff explain the purpose of the medications you were to take at home in a way you could understand?	2.9

Question	% missing responses (of those eligible to respond)
36. Did a member of staff tell you about medication side effects to watch for?	3.4
37. 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?	5.9
38. Did a member of staff tell you about any danger signals or complications you should watch for after you went home?	5.4
39. Did hospital staff tell you who to contact if you were worried about your condition or treatment after you left the Emergency Department?	New question
40. Was the main reason you went to the Emergency Department dealt with to your satisfaction?	3.0
41. Overall, did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the Emergency Department?	3.7
42. Overall, how would you rate the care you received in the Emergency Department?	3.5
43. Are you male or female?	3.2
44. What was your year of birth?	5.6 (from inpatient 2004 data)
45. How old were you when you left full-time education?	5.3
46. Overall, how would you rate your health during the past 4 weeks?	3.4
47. Do you have a long-standing physical or mental health problem or disability?	New question
48. Does this problem or disability affect your day-to-day activities?	New question
49. To which of these ethnic groups would you say you belong?	5.5

11 Conclusions

The revised questionnaire includes almost all of the questions that were used in the 2003 performance indicator calculation, and includes some minor alterations to the wording of the original questions. All but one of the questions that have been removed from the core have been retained for optional use in the question bank, so trusts can still use them if they wish to make comparisons over time using those questions.

25/06/2004