Preparation of core questionnaire for Outpatients survey 2004/05

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1 Introduction
The Outpatients Department survey was carried out in 171 acute and specialist hospital trusts in England in 2003. The overall response rate was 63%. The survey results were used locally in quality improvement programmes and in the 2003 performance indicators 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. Any 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 making changes

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

- Picker Institute Europe carried out the surveys for 93 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 (DH) Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets were taken into account.

- The Outpatients Department study carried out in 2002, in which recent users of the Outpatients Department were asked to rate 46 issues in order of importance to them.

- We contacted all lead contacts in NHS trusts that carried out the Outpatients 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 Outpatients core questionnaire 2002/03 Version 15.

Some questions that were not included in performance indicators in the 2002/03 survey, or that were not found to be very useful for quality improvement purposes have been removed. Almost all questions removed from the core questionnaire will be retained for use in the question bank.

* * *

A2. Before your appointment, did you know the reason for the appointment?
A3. Before your appointment, did you know who to contact if your symptoms or condition got worse?

These questions were removed because:

- They were not included in the DH PSA targets
• Trust feedback indicated that this question was not very useful for their quality improvement planning, because the responsibility for ensuring communicating this information was shared between acute trusts and PCTs

• The question now numbered 3 in the 2005 questionnaire has been added, and it covers a similar issue. This is a better question because it asks whether patients knew what would happen during their appointment, and this is more clearly the acute trust’s responsibility, and patient feedback indicates that, for example patients might attend an outpatients appointment without knowing that they should expect an endoscopy. It is likely that trusts could improve care standards relatively easily by addressing this type of problem.

*   *   *

D6. 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 concern that this might be a leading question

• It was not used in PIs in the 2003 survey and it was not included in DH PSA targets

• 89% of respondents said “no”.

*   *   *

F1. 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.

*   *   *

F2. When you were in the Outpatients 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 the 2003 survey and it was not included in DH PSA targets

*   *   *
5 Minor changes to existing questions in core questionnaire

Question numbers refer to the new Outpatients core questionnaire 2004/5 Version 3.

The 2002/03 questionnaire included the following question:

Overall, from the time you were first told you needed an appointment to the time you went to the Outpatients Department, how long did you wait for an appointment?

1. Up to 1 month
2. More than 1 month but no more than 3 months
3. More than 3 months but no more than 5 months
4. More than 5 months but no more than 12 months
5. More than 12 months but no more than 18 months
6. More than 18 months
7. I went to Outpatients without an appointment
8. Don’t know/ Can’t remember

The response options to this question have now been changed:

1. Overall, from the time you were first told you needed an appointment to the time you went to the Outpatients Department, how long did you wait for an appointment?

1. Up to 6 weeks
2. More than 6 weeks but no more than 3 months
3. More than 3 months but no more than 5 months
4. More than 5 months but no more than 12 months
5. More than 12 months but no more than 18 months
6. More than 18 months
7. I went to Outpatients without an appointment
8. Don’t know/ Can’t remember

The reason for this change is that a target was introduced in the NHS Improvement Plan (2004) that waits for initial outpatient consultations should not exceed six weeks.

* * *
The 2002/03 questionnaire included the following question:

**Was your appointment changed by the hospital?**

The question has now been changed to:

4. **Was your appointment changed to a later date by the hospital?**

The reason for this change is that some trusts noted that they might offer patients earlier appointments if they had some cancellations.

* * *

The 2002/03 questionnaire included the following question:

**Who was the main other person you saw?**

1. A nurse
2. A physiotherapist
3. A dietician
4. A pharmacist
5. A radiographer
6. Someone else *(Please write in box)*

The question has now been changed to:

20. **Who was the main other person you saw? (Tick ONE only)**

1. A nurse
2. A physiotherapist
3. A radiographer
4. Someone else *(Please write in box)*

There were a number of unusable responses to this section, since many patients ticked 2 or more boxes. Also, there were very low numbers of responses to dietician and pharmacist, (0.5% and 0.6% respectively) and space on the questionnaire was at a premium so these options were deleted, but patients will still be able to name those professionals under the “something else” option.

* * *
The 2002/03 questionnaire included the following question:

**How long were you with the doctor?**

1. □ Up to 5 minutes
2. □ 6 - 10 minutes
3. □ 11 - 20 minutes
4. □ 21 - 30 minutes
5. □ 31 - 40 minutes
6. □ More than 40 minutes
7. □ Can’t remember

The response options to this question have now been changed:

13. **How long were you with the doctor?**

1. □ Up to 5 minutes
2. □ 6 - 10 minutes
3. □ 11 - 20 minutes
4. □ 21 - 30 minutes
5. □ 31 or longer
6. □ Can’t remember

Only 1% of respondents said they were with the doctor more than 40 minutes, so that response category was removed.

* * *

The 2002/03 questionnaire included the following question:

**During your outpatients appointment, did you have any tests (such as blood tests, x-rays, or scans) to help find out more about your condition?**

The question has now been changed to:

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

The reason for this change is to simplify the question and bring it into line with the 2005 Emergency survey.

* * *
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 a hospital doctor or nurse
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:

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

1. Yes
2. No
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 were 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:

**51. What was your year of birth?**

The reason for the change was that it offered a more precise assessment of the patient’s age, and this brings the question into line with other national surveys.
6 Minor changes to questions now in question bank

In this section, question numbers refer to the Outpatients question bank 2004/05 Version 3. (This question was previously in the core questionnaire but is now in the question bank only.)

* * *

F3. When you were in the Outpatients 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 Outpatients Core Questionnaire 2004/5 Version 3.

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

2. Were you given a choice of appointment times?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No, but I did not need/want a choice
3. ☐ No, but I would have liked a choice
4. ☐ Don't know/ Can't remember

3. Before your appointment, did you know what would happen to you during the appointment?

1. ☐ Yes, definitely
2. ☐ Yes, to some extent
3. ☐ No

25. Were you given enough privacy when discussing your condition or treatment?

1. ☐ Yes, definitely
2. ☐ Yes, to some extent
3. ☐ No
26. Were you given enough privacy when being examined or treated?

1. [ ] Yes, definitely
2. [ ] Yes, to some extent
3. [ ] No

29. Did the staff treating and examining you introduce themselves?

1. [ ] Yes, all of the staff introduced themselves
2. [ ] Some of the staff introduced themselves
3. [ ] Very few or none of the staff introduced themselves
4. [ ] Don’t know/ Can’t remember

8 New questions added

The following questions were added because feedback from Department of Health and trusts indicated that these were important topics that were not adequately covered in the 2002/03 questionnaire.

8. Was it easy to get through the main entrance and move around in the outpatients department?

1. [ ] Yes, it was easy
2. [ ] No, it was difficult
3. [ ] Don’t know/ Can’t remember

43. Did you receive copies of letters sent between hospital doctors and your family doctor (GP)?

1. [ ] Yes, as far as I know I received copies of all letters
2. [ ] I received copies of some but not all letters
3. [ ] No, I did not receive copies of any letters
4. [ ] I do not know if any letters were sent
5. [ ] I asked not to receive copies of letters

* * *
The following question was added to bring the questionnaire into line with the Emergency Department questionnaire

46. Was the main reason you went to the Outpatients Department dealt with to your satisfaction?

1. ☐ Yes, completely
2. ☐ Yes, to some extent
3. ☐ No

Two new questions were added on disability:

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

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No

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

1. ☐ Yes, definitely
2. ☐ Yes, to some extent
3. ☐ No
9 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 Outpatient Department survey. Where a question was not included in the core questionnaire, the Picker 12-page survey data has been used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% missing responses (of those eligible to respond)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Overall, from the time you were first told you needed an appointment to the time you went to the Outpatients Department, how long did you wait for an appointment?</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Were you given a choice of appointment times?</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Before your appointment, did you know what would happen to you during the appointment?</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Was your appointment changed to a later date by the hospital?</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wording changed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How long after the stated appointment time did the appointment start?</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Were you told how long you would have to wait?</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Were you told why you had to wait?</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Was it easy to get through the main entrance and move around in the Outpatients Department?</td>
<td>New question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. In your opinion, how clean was the Outpatients Department?</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How clean were the toilets at the Outpatients Department?</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Was all or part of your outpatient appointment with a doctor?</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Did you have enough time to discuss your health or medical problem with the doctor?</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. How long were you with the doctor?</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(response options changed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>% missing responses (of those eligible to respond)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Did the doctor explain the reasons for any treatment or action in a way that you could understand?</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Did the doctor listen to what you had to say?</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. If you had important questions to ask the doctor, did you get answers that you could understand?</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Did you have confidence and trust in the doctor examining and treating you?</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Did the doctor seem aware of your medical history?</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Was all or part of your outpatient appointment with any member of staff, other than a doctor?</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Who was the main other person you saw? (Tick ONE only) (wording and response options changed)</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. If you had any important questions to ask him/her, did you get answers that you could understand?</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Did you have confidence and trust in him/her?</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Did doctors and/or other staff talk in front of you as if you weren’t there?</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. While you were in the Outpatients Department, how much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Were you given enough privacy when discussing your condition or treatment?</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Were you given enough privacy when being examined or treated?</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Sometimes in a hospital or clinic, a member of staff will say one thing and another will say something quite different. Did this happen to you?</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Did the staff treating and examining you introduce themselves?</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Have you ever visited this Outpatients Department before, for the same condition?</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Do you see the same doctor or other member of staff whenever you go to the Outpatients Department?</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Did you have any tests (such as x-rays, scans, or blood tests) when you visited the Outpatients Department?</td>
<td>5.6 (change of wording)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Did a member of staff explain why you need these test(s) in a way you could understand?</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>% missing responses (of those eligible to respond)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Did a member of staff tell you how you would find out the results of your test(s)?</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Did a member of staff explain the results of the tests in a way you could understand?</td>
<td>4.5 (change to wording of one response option)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. During your outpatient appointment did you have any treatment for your condition?</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Before the treatment did a member of staff explain what would happen?</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Before the treatment did a member of staff explain any risks and/or benefits in a way you could understand?</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Before you left the Outpatients Department, were any new medicines prescribed or ordered for you?</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Did a member of staff explain to you how to take the new medications?</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Did a member of staff explain the purpose of the medications you were to take at home in a way you could understand?</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Did a member of staff tell you about medication side effects to watch out for?</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Did you receive copies of letters sent between hospital doctors and your family doctor (GP)?</td>
<td>New question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Did a member of staff tell you about any danger signals or complications you should watch for after you went home?</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Did hospital staff tell you who to contact if you were worried about your condition or treatment after you left hospital?</td>
<td>8.0 (changes to response options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Was the main reason you went to the Outpatient Department dealt with to your satisfaction?</td>
<td>New question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. How well organised was the Outpatients Department you visited?</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Overall, did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were at the Outpatient Department?</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Overall, how would you rate the care you received at the Outpatients Department?</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Are you male or female?</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. What was your year of birth?</td>
<td>5.6 (from inpatient 2004 data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. How old were you when you left full-time education?</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>% missing responses (of those eligible to respond)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Overall, how would you rate your health during the past 4 weeks?</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Do you have a long-standing physical or mental health problem or disability?</td>
<td>New question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Does this problem or disability affect your day-to-day activities?</td>
<td>New question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. To which of these ethnic groups would you say you belong?</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10 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 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.