

10a Waiting Times Survey

Introduction

Patient satisfaction surveys are simple brief objective questionnaires that are easily administered and provide a 'snapshot' of service provision. Survey results provided by Mendip Country Practice to the NHS and community demonstrate transparency and a commitment by the Practice to continuous quality improvement in healthcare. A survey was undertaken to assess what the current waiting times at the Practice were because patients have a right to expect to be seen in a timely manner after arriving at the surgery. They do not wish to wait for a prolonged time after they arrive for a routine appointment although there will always be exceptional circumstances due to the nature of primary health care provision where delay is unavoidable

Purpose

Mendip Country Practice sought to survey patient waiting times after signing in at the surgery for a routine appointment and bench-mark the results with the information from the NHS Patient survey of 2010-11 to identify overall improvement

Methodology

Patients attending Mendip Country Practice for a routine appointment the week commencing February 6th 2012 were asked to complete, a short tick box written survey, asking them how long they had to wait before they were called for their appointment after signing in and who had they seen. Patients booked to see any member of the health care team were included in the survey. A total of 102 patients were surveyed based on the guidelines of 30 patients per 1500 and a practice population of 5105 registered patients at that time.

Commentary

Patients attending Mendip Country Practice for a routine appointment were seen within 20 minutes of signing in 87% of the time showing an improvement from the NHS 2010-11 results. While some caution is required, as the time frames within the surveys differed and the NHS Survey 2010-11 results were based on patient recall and were more likely to be approximate, the shift toward being seen promptly is evident in the results tabled in full in the appendix. It is also noted that cross referencing the information of timeframes and healthcare professionals, where patients had to wait greater than 20minutes, in all but one case this was to see the doctor and the figures were comparable to those of 2010-11.

On discussion with the Patient Group at Mendip Country Practice it was acknowledged that this information illustrated an improvement in the waiting times after signing in, that the waiting times at the Practice were generally timely and that it was not surprising that those patients who had to wait more than 20 minutes were booked to see a doctor. Further discussion of this last point surrounded the variation in the types of appointments each group within the health care team undertook and the greater ratio of complex cases and emergencies doctors attended. It was also noted that this figure appears to be constant in comparison to the results of 2010-11.

Agreement was made to publish these results on the Practice website which would expand on the feedback from patients regarding access obtained from the Mendip Country Practice Patient Survey. It was also agreed that the survey would need to be repeated in a maximum of 2 years for bench marking if these questions were not included in the Mendip Country Practice Patient Survey 2012-13.

Appendix

Waiting times survey 2012

How long did you have to wait today before you were called for your appointment?	Number	%
You were called on or before your appointment time	28	27
<10min	39	38
10-20min	22	22
20-30min	10	10
>30min	3	3
Who was your appointment with?	Number	%
HCA	6	6
Nurse	35	34
Doctor	62	61

Extract from: NHS 2010-11 Patient survey

How long after your appointment time do you normally wait to be seen?		
	%	N
I don't normally have appointments at a particular time	*	*
I am normally seen at my appointment time	7	30
Less than 5 minutes	12	48
5 to 15 minutes	58	232
16 to 30 minutes	17	70
More than 30 minutes	3	12
Can't remember	*	*
Total		403

How do you feel about how long you normally have to wait?		
	%	N
I don't normally have to wait too long	68	272
I have to wait a bit too long	21	83
I have to wait far too long	6	25
No opinion/doesn't apply	5	22
Total		402

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the reception staff who administered the survey and members of the Patient Group for their comments