

Development of the Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2015

Background

Every 12 months, each annual survey in the NSW Patient Survey Program is reviewed to ensure it is performing appropriately and collecting the information that is intended. In April 2015, the 2014 Adult Admitted Patient Survey (AAPS) questionnaire was reviewed. As substantial refinements were made to the questionnaire in the previous year, this review focused on consistency across reporting periods and only essential changes were made. This document summarises the changes to the AAPS questionnaire from the 2014 to 2015 survey years.

Methods

Analysis of historic AAPS data

An analysis of the first two quarters of 2014 AAPS survey data was undertaken to support the questionnaire review. This analysis determined the following for each question:

- Response patterns for each question, including rates of item non-response (not answering a question when they should have), invalid responses (selecting more than one answer to a single response question or answering a question they should have skipped past) and non-specific responses, such as 'don't know', 'can't remember' or 'not applicable to me'
- Ceiling and floor effects of response categories (responses where almost all patients are very positive or very negative, with little variation between hospitals) using the scored mean, standard deviation and skewness of responses
- Correlations between questions (using the most positive response category) to understand if any questions appear to be duplicating the same aspect of care (using the Pearson method).

Approval of changes

Before finalisation of survey changes, recommendations are made and assessed at a number of levels, as follows:

1. Following the aforementioned review, the survey team at BHI compile recommendations to present to the BHI Chief Executive (CE)
2. Following the CE's review, a revised draft questionnaire and summary of changes is provided to the survey program's Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC)
3. When final changes are agreed upon with the SAC and signed off by the BHI CE, the questionnaire is provided to the external contractor for layout in design, printing and mailing.

Summary of changes for the Adult Admitted Patient Survey

The following lists the changes. Rationale and evidence for changes can be found in the following section.

Q number (2014)	Question	Change
2	From the time a doctor said you would need to go to hospital, how long did you have to wait to be admitted?	Deleted
3	Do you think the amount of time you waited was...?	Deleted
4	Before your arrival, how much information about your hospital stay was given to you?	Moved to 'Operations and Procedures' section and changed question to reference the operation or procedure
8	Were the staff you saw on your arrival to hospital polite and courteous?	Replaced 'saw' with 'met'
12, 13	Did you see <u>nurses/doctors</u> wash their hands, use hand gel to clean their hands, or put on clean gloves before touching you?	Removed 'or put on clean gloves'
26	Were the doctors polite and courteous?	Deleted
34	Were the nurses polite and courteous?	Deleted
37-39	Other health professionals questions (who received care from, if polite and courteous, confidence and trust in them)	Deleted these questions
52	While in hospital, did you receive, or see, any information about your rights as a patient, including how to comment or complain?	Reword question to 'While in hospital, did you receive or see any information about how to comment or complain about your care?'
53	Not including the reason you came to hospital, during your hospital stay, or soon afterwards, did you experience any of the following complications or problems?	<p>Changed 'complications as a result of surgery' to 'complications as a result of an operation or surgical procedure'.</p> <p>Changed 'complications as a result of tests or procedures' to 'complications as a result of tests, x-rays or scans'.</p> <p>Added an instruction to select all the response categories that apply</p>
55	In your opinion, were members of the hospital staff open with you about this complication or problem?	Added 'Not applicable, as it was after I left' to response set
60	Did a health professional discuss the purpose of these tests, X-rays or scans with you?	Underlined 'purpose'

68	Before your operation or surgical procedure, did a health professional explain what would be done in a way you could understand?	Added 'began' after 'procedure'
76	Were you given or prescribed medication to take at home?	Added 'any <u>new</u> ' in front of 'medication'
77	Did a health professional in the hospital explain the purpose of this medication in a way you could understand?	Underlined 'purpose'
78	Did a health professional in the hospital tell you about medication side effects to watch for?	Underlined 'side effects'
84	What were the main reasons for the delay?	Changed response category 'I had to wait for an ambulance/transport' to 'I had to wait for an ambulance or hospital transport'
88	Did you want to make a complaint about something that happened in hospital?	Moved the last response category ('No, I did not want to make a complaint') to the first position
92, 93	In the <u>week before</u> your hospital stay, how difficult was it for you to carry out your normal daily activities (e.g. physical activity, going to work, caring for children)? About <u>one month after</u> your discharge from hospital, how difficult was it for you to carry out your normal daily activities?	Changed last response category from 'I was not able to at all' to 'Too difficult to do'
N/A	Were you ever treated unfairly for any of the reasons below?	Added
N/A	About You (The Patient) section	Reordered section
N/A	Changes to cover letter.	Addition of new logo and new subheadings. Reordering paragraphs and editing content.

Details of changes

Question 2

Current question

From the time a doctor said you would need to go to hospital, how long did you have to wait to be admitted?

- Less than 1 month
- 1 to 3 months
- 4 to 6 months
- 7 to 12 months
- More than 1 year
- Don't know/can't remember

Action

Deleted question.

Rationale

This question was extremely highly correlated with Q66 (>0.9). At this level, the question was duplicating responses to such a degree as to be virtually the same question. Additionally, the valid missing response rate was 4.5%, possibly due to the additional filtering required for Q2-Q4, along with the inclusion of those who answered that their visit was for 'something else' in Q1. Removal of this question reduced the amount of routing required on the first page, while offering much the same data in Q66.

Question 3

Current question

Do you think the amount of time you waited was...?

- About right
- Slightly too long
- Much too long
- Don't know/can't remember

Action

Deleted question.

Rationale

This question had a very high correlation (>0.75) with Q67 and also had a 4.5% rate of valid missing responses. This question was therefore underperforming by duplicating the same aspect of care measured by Q67. As this question was paired with the previous question, it was removed in favour of using data from Q67 to assess acceptability of the waiting time.

Question 4

Current question

Before your arrival, how much information about your hospital stay was given to you?

- Not enough
- The right amount
- Too much
- Don't know/can't remember

Action

Moved to 'Operations and Procedures' section and reworded to 'Before your arrival, how much information about your operation or surgical procedure was given to you by the hospital?' with the same response categories.

Rationale

This question was the last in the set of three (Q2 and Q3 discussed above) from the section 'Before Arriving at Hospital'. As the previous two questions were deleted, this was the remaining question in this section. Due to this, the survey team reviewed evidence on the question quality and the best location for it. Results of this analysis showed that the question did not demonstrate any high correlation to other questions, had a moderately-high level of (4.5%) valid missing responses and no ceiling or floor effect. However, there was evidence to suggest that some respondents answering the question were actually emergency patients, especially those who answered 'something else' to Q1. Additionally, patients who had planned surgery responded differently to those who did not. Finally, cognitive testing for the Small and Rural Hospitals Survey provided evidence that respondents feel they should be answering about information given about their operation when answering this question, suggesting it would fit better in the 'Operations and Procedures' section. It was therefore moved to this section and reworded appropriately.

Question 8

Current questions

Were the staff you saw on your arrival to hospital polite and courteous?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

Action

Replaced 'saw' with 'met'.

Rationale

The change was made to clarify that the question is asking about staff the patient interacted with rather than those they just saw on arrival.

Questions 12 and 13

Current question

12. Did you see nurses wash their hands, use hand gel to clean their hands, or put on clean gloves before touching you?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No, I did not see this
- Can't remember

13. Did you see doctors wash their hands, use hand gel to clean their hands, or put on clean gloves before touching you?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No, I did not see this
- Can't remember

Action

Deleted 'or put on clean gloves'.

Rationale

This part of the question was removed, as per removal from other surveys in the program, as the Clinical Excellence Commission pointed out that doctors and nurses are still supposed to clean their hands, even if using gloves.

Question 26

Current questions

Were the doctors polite and courteous?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

...and Question 34

Current question

Were the nurses polite and courteous?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

Action

Removal of these questions.

Rationale

Q26 and Q27 (whether doctors were kind and caring) were highly correlated (0.727), as were Q34 and Q35 (whether nurses were kind and caring) (0.80). Additionally, cognitive testing for the Small and Rural Hospitals Survey showed these questions were asking about the same component of care as 'kind and caring'. In the case of both the doctor and nurse questions, 'kind and caring' is more highly correlated to overall ratings of doctors or nurses (0.640 and 0.704 respectively). This suggests 'kind and caring' is a better predictor of patient satisfaction with staff, at the time patients are interacting with doctors and nurses on the ward. While we don't have the equivalent data for the admission phase, survey development work with patients has suggested that politeness is more important at this earlier point of care. BHI consulted with the survey program's Implementation Advisory Committee on whether these questions were being used as KPIs and, after receiving a negative response, they were deleted.

Other health professionals (section) – Questions 37, 38 and 39**Current questions**

37. Which, if any, of the following other health professionals did you receive care or treatment from during this hospital stay? Please x all the boxes that apply to you

- Dietician
- Occupational therapist
- Pharmacist
- Physiotherapist
- Psychologist
- Radiographer (X-ray, ultrasound, MRI)
- Social worker
- Speech pathologist
- Other (Please write in _____)
- None of these

38. Were these other health professionals polite and courteous?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

39. Did you have confidence and trust in these other health professionals?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

Action

Removal of these questions.

Rationale

While almost half of respondents saw other health professionals, populations of the specific health professionals were so small that discrimination between them was very difficult. Furthermore, being a multi-response question, some respondents selected multiple other health professionals, making the following questions difficult to analyse in response to a particular type of professional. Hence, the data was uninformative and not useful to LHDs and facilities for the formation of policy or review of staff.

Furthermore, all three questions had valid missing response rates between 5%-8%, potentially indicating a lack of understanding of the section, uncertainty about which professionals were seen, or a high level of cognitive difficulty with the question. The first of these questions on which, if any, other healthcare professionals patients saw was useful for priming respondents to answer questions in the next section correctly (i.e. about 'all health professionals' not just doctors and nurses). However, a blurb was added before the next section instructing patients to think about all health professionals who cared for them.

Question 52

Current question

While in hospital, did you receive, or see, any information about your rights as a patient, including how to comment or complain?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/can't remember

Action

Removed the reference to 'your rights as a patient' and changed to:

While in hospital, did you receive or see any information about how to comment or complain about your care?

Rationale

The question had a very high proportion of 'don't know' responses (31%). Cognitive testing indicated that the term 'rights' is not one that some are familiar with in regards to their patient experience, causing some uncertainty in responding. Also, while respondents may have seen signs posted in the hospitals, many did not read them or failed to register the connection between those posters and this question. Often, posters promoting patient rights are lost among other posters and pamphlets on the ward.

The modified version of the question was cognitively tested and no issues were identified in the understanding of this new version.

Question 53

Current question

Not including the reason you came to hospital, during your hospital stay, or soon afterwards, did you experience any of the following complications or problems?

- An infection
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- A negative reaction to medication
- Complications as a result of surgery
- Complications as a result of tests or procedures
- A blood clot
- A pressure wound or bed sore
- A fall
- Any other complication or problem
- None of these

Action

Changed 'complications as a result of surgery' to 'complications as a result of an operation or surgical procedure'.

Changed 'complications as a result of tests or procedures' to 'complications as a result of tests, x-rays or scans'.

Rationale

To aid analysis of results in terms by aligning categories between these response options and the questions asking if the respondent had 'tests, x-rays or scans', or an 'operation or surgical procedure'.

Question 55

Current question

In your opinion, were members of the hospital staff open with you about this complication or problem?

- Yes, completely
- Yes, to some extent
- No

Action

Added 'Not applicable, as it was after I left' option.

Rationale

For those people who experience a complication after leaving hospital, this question was not appropriate in its original format, which may have contributed to the high rate of missing responses for this question (7%).

Question 60

Current question

Did a health professional discuss the purpose of these tests, X-rays or scans with you?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

Action

Underlined 'purpose'.

Rationale

This question had a 5% rate of valid missing responses. Review of the survey results has provided evidence that underlining key words in questions does have an impact on how people respond; specifically, decreasing the proportion of missing responses. In this case, it may help to distinguish the focus of the question, as it appears in a series of four questions on the subject of tests.

Question 68

Current question

Before your operation or surgical procedure, did a health professional explain what would be done in a way you could understand?

- Yes, completely
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- I did not want or need an explanation

Action

Add 'began' after 'procedure'.

Rationale

Given the move of Q4 (information before arrival) to before this question, there was a need to distinguish timeframe, so this question did not seem to be also referring to the time before hospital.

Question 76

Current question

Were you given or prescribed medication to take at home?

- Yes
- No

Action

Added 'any new' in front of medication.

Rationale

In 2014, two questions about whether health professionals discussed the purpose and side-effects of the medication with the patient were added to the questionnaire, in line with the series of questions asked in the ED Patient Survey. However, the ED survey asks about new medications and these subsequent questions are more relevant to patients with new medication.

Questions 77 and 78

Current questions

77. Did a health professional in the hospital explain the purpose of this medication in a way you could understand?

- Yes, completely
- Yes, to some extent
- No

78. Did a health professional in the hospital tell you about medication side effects to watch for?

- Yes, completely
- Yes, to some extent
- No

Action

Underlined 'purpose' and 'side effects'.

Rationale

These questions had a 3.8% and 4.7% rate of valid missing responses, respectively. Review of the survey results has provided evidence that underlining key words in questions does have an impact on how people respond, specifically, decreasing the proportion of missing responses. In this case, it may help to distinguish the focus of each question, as they appear in a series of four questions on the subject of medication.

Question 84

Current question

What were the main reasons for the delay? Please *X all* the boxes that apply to you.

- I had to wait for medicines
- I had to wait to see the doctor
- I had to wait for an ambulance/transport
- I had to wait for the letter for my GP
- I was not well enough
- Some other reason
- Don't know/can't remember

Action

Replace 'I had to wait for an ambulance/transport' with 'I had to wait for an ambulance or hospital transport'

Rationale

To make the response option more relevant to the hospital performance and prevent people from responding in relation to waiting to be picked up by a relative, etc.

Question 88

Current question

Did you want to make a complaint about something that happened in hospital?

- Yes, and I did complain
- Yes, but I did not complain
- No, I did not want to make a complaint

Action

Changed order or response categories so that the 'No' option is first.

Rationale

This question had a relatively high proportion of valid missing responses (3.8%) which may have resulted from the difficult routing instructions due to the ordering of the response categories. Reordering was intended to make the instructions clearer for respondents.

Questions 92 and 93

Current questions

92. In the week before your hospital stay, how difficult was it for you to carry out your normal daily activities (e.g. physical activity, going to work, caring for children)?

- Not at all difficult
- Only a little difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult
- I was not able to at all

93. About one month after your discharge from hospital, how difficult was it for you to carry out your normal daily activities?

- Not at all difficult
- Only a little difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult
- I was not able to at all

Action

Changed last category to 'Too difficult to do'.

Rationale

The wording for the last response category did not fit with the other options. More consistent terminology would be 'too difficult to do' and this was tested in the Small and Rural Hospitals Survey cognitive testing and found to work well.

Unfair treatment question addition

Action

Add the following (modified NHS UK) question on unfair treatment, as now used in Victoria. Placed question immediately after Q43 (i.e. whether patient's cultural or religious beliefs were respected).

Were you ever treated unfairly for any of the reasons below? *Please x all the boxes that apply to you*

- Your age
- Your sex
- Your ethnic background
- Your religion
- Your sexual orientation
- A disability that you have
- Marital status
- Something else
- I was not treated unfairly

Rationale

There is evidence from the UK that sexual orientation that is non-heterosexual is associated with a poorer experience of care. This question is a less direct (perhaps less confronting) method of addressing sexual orientation and its impact on care, with the added advantage of capturing other potential sources of discrimination. Comparisons can be made in future with Victoria, who recently added this to their patient experience surveys. This question was cognitively tested during development of the Small and Rural Hospitals Survey. This question has been added to other surveys across the survey program.

About You (The Patient) section

Action

Reordered section.

Rationale

There were a relatively high proportion of invalid responses to the question about whether patients (who spoke a main language other than English at home) needed an interpreter (31.4%). To improve routing on this question the three questions on foreign language were placed in the same column.

Changes to cover letter

Action

Three main changes to the cover letter were made.

- Addition of an extra line directing respondents to view the results of the surveys on *Healthcare Observer*
- Addition of new logo and use of the acronym BHI instead of 'the Bureau'
- Reordering of some paragraphs.

Rationale

Changes made in line with changes for BHI and survey branding and to make the reference to the completion of the survey online more obvious (to encourage uptake of this mode). As far as the reference to *Healthcare Observer*, there is evidence that directing respondents to results of surveys they participate in increases uptake of future surveys. Now that BHI has *Healthcare Observer* live, we are able to direct respondents to the results. Additionally, healthcare consumers are one of BHI's stakeholder groups and to date we have not actively promoted our survey results to them.