

Development of the Small and Rural Hospitals Survey 2016

Background

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) undertakes reviews of all recurrent surveys before repeating these. The purpose is to ensure the questionnaire is still appropriate for the NSW context and that all questions remain optimal. In January and February 2016, BHI reviewed the questionnaire used in the 2015 Small and Rural Hospitals Survey (SRHS) to prepare for the collection of experience data from patients hospitalised from January to December 2016. This document summarises the changes to the SRHS questionnaire from the 2015 to 2016 survey years.

Method

Analysis of historic SRHS data

An analysis of the first quarter of SRHS 2015 data was undertaken to support the questionnaire review. This analysis determined the following for each question:

- Responses 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 option) to understand if any questions appear to be duplicating the same aspect of care (using the Pearson method).

Approval of changes

A final version of the draft questionnaire was approved by the Director, Surveys, and the Chief Executive, BHI. The questionnaire was sent to design for layout prior to printing and scanning. Following review of the design file, the Chief Executive gave final approval to the questionnaire and for the survey to begin. The questionnaire was then provided to the external contractor for printing and mailing.

Summary of changes to the Small and Rural Hospitals Survey

The following is a list of the changes. The rationale and evidence can be found in the following section.

Q number (2015)	Question	Change
NA	Last bullet point in 'How to complete the survey' instructions, i.e.: 'If you have misplaced the "Reply Paid" envelope, please use a plain envelope (no stamp is necessary) and address to:'	Changed to: 'If you have misplaced the "Reply Paid" envelope, please mail to our survey processing centre at the following address (no stamp is required):'
1	Why did you go to the hospital named on the cover of this booklet?	Question broken into two components asking: Was your stay in the hospital named on the cover of this booklet planned in advance or an emergency? and Were you transferred to this hospital from another hospital?
17	Did you need help from staff to eat your meals?	Removed question
18	Did you get enough help from staff to eat your meals?	Removed question
34	If you needed assistance, were you able to get a member of staff to help you within a reasonable timeframe?	Removed question
New	During your stay in this hospital, did staff assist you when you needed help for any of the following?	Added to 'Your Treatment and Care' section
42	During your stay in this hospital, did you have any tests, X-rays or scans?	Removed question
43	Did a health professional in this hospital discuss the purpose of these tests, X-rays or scans with you?	Removed question
83	What is the highest level of education you have <u>completed</u> ?	Combined first two response options to 'Less than Year 12 or equivalent'
89	Data linkage question	Moved to preceding page on inside back cover

Details of changes

'How to complete the survey' instructions

Current wording

'If you have misplaced the "Reply Paid" envelope, please use a plain envelope (no stamp is necessary) and address to:'

Action

Change wording to:

'If you have misplaced the "Reply Paid" envelope, please mail to our survey processing centre at the following address (no stamp is required):'

Rationale

Focus group and interview participants have at times commented on the fact that the surveys are being sent to Victoria and wonder why a NSW Health survey is going to Victoria. This change aims to clarify that this address is just for survey processing.

Question 1

Current question

Q1. Why did you go to the hospital named on the cover of this booklet?

- I was transferred from another hospital
- I needed emergency treatment
- My stay was planned in advance
- Something else

Action

Replace with:

Was your stay in the hospital named on the cover of this booklet planned in advance or an emergency?

- Emergency or urgent
- Planned in advance
- Something else

And

Were you transferred to this hospital from another hospital?

- Yes
- No

Rationale

Data from this question showed that some respondents were confused by the original question, particularly the double-barrelled nature covering both transferring and type of admission. To simplify the questionnaire, this question has now been broken into two questions.

Questions 17-18

Current questions

Q17. Did you need help from staff to eat your meals?

- Yes
- No

Q18. Did you get enough help from staff to eat your meals?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

Action

Removed these two questions.

Rationale

Only 5% of respondents needed help from staff to eat their meals (AAPS 2015) making these questions unreportable for most facilities and of limited use. These questions were removed to allow for the addition of new questions.

Questions 34

Current question

Q34. If you needed assistance, were you able to get a member of staff to help you within a reasonable timeframe?

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never
- I did not need assistance

Action

Removed this question.

Rationale

This question was replaced with a grid style question asking respondents whether they needed assistance across eight specified tasks and whether they got it in a timely fashion.

New question

During your stay in this hospital, did staff assist you when you needed help for any of the following?

	Yes, always	Yes, sometimes	No	I did not need assistance with this
Eating or drinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking medication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Going to the toilet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjusting your position in bed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standing up or walking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting dressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting in or out of a wheelchair or chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the telephone or television	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action

Add to 'Your Treatment and Care' section.

Rationale

This question aims to collect data on whether the patient felt they needed assistance and, if so, whether they got the help at the time it was needed.

Questions 42-43

Current questions

Q42. During your stay in this hospital, did you have any tests, X-rays or scans?

- Yes
- No

Q18. Did a health professional in this hospital discuss the purpose of these tests, X-rays or scans with you?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

Action

Removed these two questions.

Rationale

These questions were removed to make space for the large grid question on patient needs and whether these were met by hospital staff (see immediately above).

Question 83**Current question**

Q83. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Still at secondary school
- Less than Year 12 or equivalent
- Completed Year 12 or equivalent
- Trade or technical certificate or diploma
- University degree
- Post graduate/higher degree

Action

Combine first two response options to “Less than Year 12 or equivalent”

Rationale

In the Adult Admitted Patient Surveys and the Emergency Department Patient Surveys, we saw that age distribution of patients answering ‘still at secondary school’ option was similar to those answering ‘less than year 12 or equivalent’. Very few respondents were of an age to still be at school supporting the hypothesis that this response is incorrectly used by older patients to indicate that they did not complete secondary school. For this reason, the question will revert to an earlier version where both options are covered under ‘still at secondary school’.

Question 89**Current question**

Q89. Do you give permission for the Bureau of Health Information to link your answers from this survey to health records related to you?

- Yes
- No

Action

Relocate question to previous page (inside back cover of questionnaire).

Rationale

This question was positioned on the back cover of the 2015 SRHS questionnaire but evidence collected from the Emergency Department Patient Survey showed that this resulted in a greater proportion of patients missing the question. By moving it into the main body of the questionnaire rather than the comments section, we aim to reduce the percentage of patients who did not answer this question.