

Hospital experiences improving

A recent [Care Quality Commission survey](#) suggests that people are having a better experience in hospital compared to a year ago. However, the survey also highlights areas for improvement and variations in performance between trusts.

The survey looked at the experiences of over 62,000 people who were admitted to a NHS hospital for at least one night between June and August in 2013. The respondents were from 156 acute and specialist NHS Trusts and were questioned about their experiences of hospital from admission to discharge. The survey excluded maternity services and psychiatry units.

Many areas have seen improvements from the previous 2012 in-patient survey especially in information provision, communication with staff and cleanliness of wards. Areas of communication that saw improvements were information given about their condition and treatment and the provision of information about the risks and benefits of procedures and operations in a way they could understand. Whilst overall the patient experience has improved, an area for concern is the lack of involvement of the patient in decisions about their care, especially around their discharge from hospital, with a large proportion of patients not feeling fully involved. Less than half (43%) were “completely” told about danger signals they should watch out for at home. Responses to the survey show that less than two fifths of patients were “completely” told about medication side effects and what to watch out for. Delays to discharge from hospital remain unchanged with 41% of respondents having their discharge delayed, many of which were due to waiting for medication to take home.

Between trusts, there was little variation in scores in some areas such as, doctor confidence, feeling threatened and privacy in examinations, but much greater variation in others, for example, receiving copies of correspondence, information on how to complain and information on danger signals after discharge.

Whilst the report is encouraging nevertheless, we are finding that the level of enquiries relating to claims arising out of poor communication and hospital acquired infection remains high.

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