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Still room for improvement in integration of care for hospital patients

More than 35,000 patients have rated NSW hospitals well on aspects of integration of care, including self-management support and provision of information. The findings are one piece of the picture in exploring the broader issue of integrated care.

BHI Chief Executive, Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque said that across 22 questions included in its latest *Patients Perspectives* report, the vast majority of patients (78% to 98%) scored the system positively.

"Results are good overall but for some aspects of integration there is still room for improvement. The percentage of patients giving top marks to their hospital ranged from 54 to 91 percent," Dr Levesque said.

The report compares results across hospitals, local health districts and internationally. Within the state, smaller hospitals and more rural districts performed well. Internationally, NSW performed better than, or in line many other countries.

"Overall the strongest results were related to information flow to patients – 91 percent of patients said they received the right amount of information both before their arrival to hospital and in relation to their discharge medication.

"Patients generally said they were able to understand answers from doctors (96%) and nurses (97%) with 71 percent receiving a 'completely' understandable explanation of their test, x-ray or scan results," Dr Levesque said.

In terms of involvement of patients in decisions about their care 93 percent reported being involved in decisions with 60 percent 'definitely' involved as much as they wanted to be.

Other results identified in the report include:

- About 96 percent of patients said their care was well organised with 64 percent reporting it was 'very well' organised. Patients generally said they were involved in decisions (around 90%) with 64 percent reporting being 'completely' involved in medication decisions and 63 percent 'completely' involved in decisions around discharge
- The way that doctors and nurses worked together was viewed positively by 89 percent of patients with 54 percent reporting this as 'very good'
- Aboriginal people, people who mainly speak a language other than English at home, and those with long-standing health conditions were less positive about many aspects of their care.

"When a direct comparison is made with the National Health Service in England, NSW is rated more favourably on most measures.

"This report is consistent with other research that shows patients are generally happy with their care in hospitals, nevertheless there is room for improvement in achieving the highest levels of excellence," Dr Levesque said.

Patient Perspectives: Exploring aspects of integration for hospital patients is based on responses to the NSW Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2013. The report is available on the BHI website and associated data can be viewed and downloaded through our interactive portal Healthcare Observer at

www.bhi.nsw.gov.au

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