

Emergency Department Patient Survey 2017–18

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Development Report

April 2019

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*Please note that there is the potential for minor revisions of data in this report.
Please check the online version at **bhi.nsw.gov.au** for any amendments.*

Background

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) reviews all recurrent surveys before they are repeated. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the questionnaire is still appropriate for the NSW context and that all questions remain optimal. In 2017, BHI collaborated with the Agency for Clinical Innovation's Emergency Care Institute (ECI) to review the *Emergency Department Patient Survey (EDPS)* questionnaire for implementation with 2017–18 patients.

This document summarises the changes to the EDPS questionnaire made from the 2016–17 questionnaire to the 2017–18 version.

Please refer to the EDPS 2013–14 Development Report, available at bhi.nsw.gov.au, for information about how the original questionnaire was developed, including details on stakeholder consultation and engagement, questionnaire development, sampling methodology, and additional development notes.

Method

The following stages were undertaken in the analysis of the EDPS 2016–17 data to test the quality of question and questionnaire design:

- response patterns for each question, including rates of item non-response (not answering a question which should have been), invalid responses (selecting more than one answer to a single-response question or answering a question that should have been 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).

Following the analysis of the questionnaire content and data, BHI and ECI met to discuss and agree on proposed changes to the EDPS 2017–18 questionnaire. The final versions of the questionnaires were reviewed and signed off by the Chief Executive of BHI.

Overview of changes

New questions

Question 17.

Did you have enough time to discuss your health or medical problem with the ED doctors?

Question 24.

Did you have you have confidence and trust in the ED health professionals treating you?

Question 25.

Were the ED health professional polite and courteous?

Question 26.

Overall, how would you rate the ED health professionals who treated you?

Question 34.

In your opinion, did the ED nurses who treated you know enough about your care and treatment?

Question 39.

While you were in the ED, did you feel threatened by other patients or visitors?

Question 40.

While you were in the ED, did you see or hear any aggressive or threatening behaviour towards ED staff?

New section

PURPOSE OF VISIT

Question 76.

In the past 12 months, how many times have you visited an ED for your own care?

Question 82.

Does this condition(s) cause you difficulties with your day-to-day activities?

Question 83.

Are you a participant of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)?

Question 85.

Did you need, or would have liked, to use an interpreter at any stage while you were in the ED?

Deleted questions

Deleted section

AMBULANCE (previous Q4, Q5, Q6)

Previous Question 18.

While you were waiting to be treated, did your symptoms or condition get worse?

Deleted section.

DOCTORS (previous Q19, Q20, Q21, Q22)

Deleted section.

NURSES (previous Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26)

Previous Question 46.

How safe did you feel during your visit to the ED?

Previous Question 74.

Why didn't you make a complaint?

Previous Question 75.

While in the Emergency Department (ED), did you receive or see any information about how to comment or complain about your care?

Modified questions and questionnaire content

- Cover letter and Instructions
- Four questions had grammatical/formatting reasons (Q1, Q3, Q8)
- Four questions were moved under new section PURPOSE OF VISIT (Q72, Q73, Q74, Q75)
- Nine questions were reworded with the abbreviation of emergency department to ED (Q2, Q9, Q20, Q35, Q47, Q48, Q59, Q63, Q64)
- Four questions modified replacing reception staff with ED staff (Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7)
- Seven modified/additional response options (Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q49, Q50, Q51)

Details of changes

New questions

Question 17.

Did you have enough time to discuss your health or medical problem with the ED doctors?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- I wasn't treated by a doctor
- Don't know/can't remember

Rationale

Large numbers of patients make free-text comments about feeling rushed in the ED and not having enough time with their doctor. This raises issues both in terms of patient safety and their sense of security, so a question was added to assess this.

Question 24.

Did you have confidence and trust in the ED health professionals treating you?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No

Question 25.

Were the ED health professional polite and courteous?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

Question 26.

Overall, how would you rate the ED health professionals who treated you?

- Very good
- Good
- Neither good nor poor
- Poor
- Very poor

Rationale

These questions were added to assess patient interactions with all ED health professionals following removal of the sections asking specifically about doctors and nurses (see page 6, deleted questions 20-26).

Question 34.

In your opinion, did the ED nurses who treated you know enough about your care and treatment?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No
- I wasn't treated by a nurse
- Don't know/can't remember

Rationale

This question was added after review of the free-text comments, which showed that nurse competence to deliver clinical procedures was frequently commented on. Most of these comments were positive about the ability of nurses but the proportion making comments questioning this competence was notably higher in some hospitals.

Question 39.

While you were in the ED, did you feel threatened by other patients or visitors?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No

Question 40.

While you were in the ED, did you see or hear any aggressive or threatening behaviour towards ED staff?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- Don't know/can't remember

Rationale

These questions were added to provide greater insight into patient and staff safety in the ED following significant public interest. The previous question that asked about feeling safe was revised because it could imply both clinical safety and feeling safe with regards to other patients and visitors in the ED.

Question 76.

In the past 12 months, how many times have you visited an ED for your own care? Please include this visit.

- 1 (this visit)
- 2-3 visits
- 4-6 visits
- 6-10 visits
- More than 10 visits

Rationale

This question was added to allow analysis of the effect of recent presentations to the ED on the experiences and outcomes of patients, without requiring data linkage.

Question 82.

Does this condition(s) cause you difficulties with your day-to-day activities?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No

Rationale

This question was added to identify which respondents feel their longstanding condition results in them having a disability.

Question 83.

Are you a participant of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Rationale

This question was added to align with other BHI surveys. It provides an additional proxy measure for analysis of patients who have a disability, in combination with questions 81 and 82.

Question 85.

Did you need, or would have liked, to use an interpreter at any stage while you were in the ED?

- Yes
- No

Rationale

This question was added to align with other BHI surveys. Unlike other BHI surveys, the ED survey did not ask if patients needed an interpreter before asking if one was provided. Because of this, data from before 2017-18 is not comparable for this question.

Deleted questions

Deleted section: AMBULANCE

Previous Question 4.

Overall, did the ambulance crew treat you with respect and dignity?

Previous Question 5.

How would you rate how the ambulance crew and ED staff worked together?

Previous Question 6.

Overall, how would you rate the care you received from the ambulance service?

Rationale

Existing questions about the quality of the ambulance service for patients taken to the ED have been extremely positive with very little variation between EDs. Because of this 'ceiling effect' and the quality of care provided by ambulance services is not under the control of EDs, these questions were removed to create space for more attributable questions.

Deleted sections: DOCTORS and NURSES

Previous Question 20.

Did you have confidence and trust in the ED doctors treating you?

Previous Question 21.

Were the ED doctors polite and courteous?

Previous Question 22.

Overall, how would you rate the ED doctors who treated you?

Previous Question 24.

Did you have confidence and trust in the ED nurses treating you?

Previous Question 25.

Were the ED nurses polite and courteous?

Previous Question 26.

Overall, how would you rate the ED nurses who treated you?

Rationale

These questions were deleted following advice from ECI on how care is delivered in the ED. While it makes sense for the admitted patient questionnaire to ask about experiences with nurses and doctors separately, the model of care provided in the ED does not as clearly delineate staff roles, with health professionals sharing more of the functions of care and treatment across professions. New questions have been added asking about confidence and trust, politeness and courtesy, and ratings of staff for all ED health professionals.

Previous Question 19.

Did the Emergency Department (ED) doctors know your medical history, which had already been given to the triage nurse or ambulance crew?

Previous Question 23.

Did the ED nurses know your medical history, which had already been given to the triage nurse or ambulance crew?

Rationale

These questions had a high proportion of patients answering 'don't know/can't remember' – 11% and 12% for doctors and nurses respectively. In testing with patients, comments have also been raised that patients cannot always know why ED staff repeat the same questions. These questions were removed in response to these findings.

Previous Question 18.

While you were waiting to be treated, did your symptoms or condition get worse?

Rationale

This question was cycled out of the 2017–18 questionnaire to make room for new questions. It will be included again in future surveys.

Previous Question 46.

How safe did you feel during your visit to the ED?

Rationale

The results for this question indicated that respondents felt either 'very safe' (76%) or 'fairly safe' (22%). However, testing with patients and analysis of free-text comments showed that some patients interpret this question to be regarding physical security from other patients, visitors and staff, while others interpret it as meaning clinical safety with regards to their medical problem. Because of this, two new questions were introduced to measure patient safety in the ED (Q39, Q40) and a response option was added to Q8 about safety in the waiting area.

Previous Question 74.

Why didn't you make a complaint?

Rationale

This question was removed to make space for new questions. This question was selected as it does not reflect only on the ED performance but also personal preferences.

Previous Question 75.

While in the Emergency Department (ED), did you receive or see any information about how to comment or complain about your care?

Rationale

This question was removed because it had a very high proportion answering 'don't know/can't remember' (38%).

Modified questions and questionnaire content

Cover letter and Instructions

Action

The instruction page was amended to align with other BHI surveys

Question changes for grammatical/formatting reasons

Question 1.

What was your main form of transport to the emergency department (ED)?

- Private motor vehicle (car, motorbike, van)
- Ambulance Go to Q4
- Public transport Go to Q3
- Other

Action

An instruction was omitted for the 'Other' response that should have said 'Go to Q3'. The impact of this error was that the 4% of people who responded 'Other' to Q1 could have incorrectly answered Q2 on difficulties parking as well.

Question 3.

Was the signposting directing you to the ED of the hospital easy to follow?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No

Action

In 2016–17, this question included instructions to 'Go to Q7' so as to skip past the ambulance questions. With the removal of the ambulance section, these 'go to' instructions were deleted.

Question 8.

Did you experience any of the following issues when in the waiting area?

- I couldn't find somewhere to sit
- The seats were uncomfortable
- I did not feel safe
- It was too noisy
- It was too hot
- It was too cold
- There were bad or unpleasant smells
- No, I did not experience these issues
- I did not spend time in the waiting area Go to Q10

Action

Instruction arrows were added to this question for consistency and to improve how the question is followed by participants.

Questions moved to new section

Question 72. (Previous Q88.)

What were your reasons for going to the ED?

Question 73. (Previous Q89)

Was your visit to the ED for a condition that, at the time, you thought could have been treated by a GP?

Question 74. (Previous Q90)

In the month before visiting the ED, did you...?

Question 75. (Previous Q91.) Before your visit to the ED, had you previously been to an ED for the same condition or something related to it?

Action

Questions were moved from ABOUT YOU section to be included under the new section heading PURPOSE OF VISIT.

Rationale

These questions are not demographic in nature but rather about healthcare behaviours. They were grouped together into a new section

Questions reworded

Question 2.

Was there a problem in finding a parking place near the ED?

Question 9. (Previous Q12.)

How clean was the waiting area in the ED?

Question 20. (Previous Q31.)

If your family members or someone else close to you wanted to talk to the ED staff, did they get the opportunity to do so?

Question 35. (Previous Q42.)

Were you ever in pain while in the ED?

Question 47. (Previous Q53.)

What happened at the end of your ED visit?

Question 48. (Previous Q54.)

Did you feel involved in decisions about your discharge from the ED?

Question 59. (Previous Q65.)

Did the ED staff provide you with a document that summarised the care you received (e.g. a copy of the letter to your GP or a discharge summary)?

Question 63. (Previous Q69.)

Overall how would you rate the care you received while in the ED?

Question 64. (Previous Q70.)

If asked about your experience in the ED by friends and family, how would you respond?

Action

For all the questions listed above, 'Emergency Department (ED)' was abbreviated to simply 'ED' in the question text.

Rationale

The abbreviation ED was deemed to have been sufficiently used in the questionnaire as to no longer merit the full text at the top of each new page.

Question 4. (Previous Q7.)

Were the ED staff you met on your arrival polite and courteous?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- Don't know

Action

Replaced 'reception staff' with 'the ED staff'. In addition, also deleted 'to the ED' following the word 'arrival'. Deleted response option 'I didn't meet any reception staff'

Rationale

This was done to streamline the questionnaire and to reduce repetition for respondents.

Question 5. (Previous Q8.)

Did the ED staff you met on arrival give you enough information about what to expect during your visit?

Question 6. (Previous Q9.)

Did the ED staff you met on arrival tell you how long you would have to wait for treatment?

Question 7. (Previous Q10.)

Was the waiting time given to you by the ED staff you met on arrival about right?

Action

Replaced 'reception staff' with 'the ED staff you met on arrival'.

Rationale

This was done to streamline the questionnaire and to reduce repetition for respondents.

Modified/additional response options

Question 12. (Previous Q15.) Why did you leave the ED before receiving treatment?

- I decided to see a General Practitioner (GP)
- I did not feel comfortable waiting in the Emergency Department
- The waiting time was too long
- I decided my condition was not serious
- I decided my condition did not need immediate treatment
- Other
- Don't know/can't remember

Action

GP was expanded to read 'general practitioner (GP)'

Rationale

This was changed to increase participant understanding.

Question 13. (Previous Q16.) After triage (initial assessment), how long did you wait before being treated by an ED doctor or nurse?

- I was treated immediately.. Go to Q15
- 1-10 minutes
- 11-30 minutes
- 31-59 minutes
- 1 hour to under 2 hours
- 2 hours to under 4 hours
- 4 hours or more
- Don't know/can't remember

Action

Replaced '1-15 minutes' with '1-10 minutes'
Replaced '16-30 minutes' with '11-30 minutes'

Rationale

These intervals were changed to ensure that the time periods captured matched the ED time to treatment targets to allow comparative reporting in the future.

Question 14. (Previous Q17.) While you were waiting to be treated did ED staff check on your condition?

- Yes
- No, but I would have liked them to check
- No, but I did not need them to check
- Don't know/can't remember

Action

Deleted 'someone checked on my condition' from 'Yes' response.

Replace 'no-one checked on my condition' with 'but I would have liked them to check' from 'No' response.

Included additional 'No' response, 'No, but I did not need them to check'

Rationale

These response options were changed to clarify that some patients did not feel that they needed to be checked on during their wait for treatment.

Question 15. (Previous Q27.) Did the ED health professionals introduce themselves to you?

- Yes, all of them introduced themselves
- Some of them introduced themselves
- Very few or none of them introduced themselves
- Don't know/can't remember

Action

Deleted 'always' and replaced with 'all of them introduced themselves'

Replaced 'Yes, sometimes' with 'Some of them introduced themselves'

Replace 'No' with 'Very few or none of them introduced themselves'

Additional response option 'Don't know/can't remember'

Rationale

This question was changed to align with other BHI surveys. The question now asks whether all staff introduce themselves rather than staff constantly introducing themselves.

Question 49. (Previous Q55.) Thinking about when you left the ED, were you given enough information about how to manage your care at home?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No, I was not given enough information
- I did not need this type of information

Action

Replaced 'completely' with 'definitely' for response option 'Yes'.

Added 'information' to the response option saying they were not given enough.

Rationale

The question was modified to improve readability.

Question 50. (Previous Q56.) Did ED staff take your family and home situation into account when planning your discharge?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No, staff did not take my situation into account
- It was not necessary
- Don't know/can't remember

Question 51. (Previous Q57.) Thinking about when you left the ED, were adequate arrangements made by the hospital for any services you needed?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No, arrangements were not adequate
- It was not necessary

Action

Replaced 'completely' with 'definitely'.

Rationale

These changes were made as patients could not know if they were given every bit of information (i.e. completely) but could answer whether they felt they received enough (i.e. definitely).
