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Media Release

Survey highlights progress made to ensure privacy of patients

The Royal United Hospital has received top marks for its work to ensure the privacy of patients attending the Emergency Department.

In a survey published today, 64% of patients who responded felt they had been given enough privacy when discussing their condition with a receptionist on arrival at the Emergency Department (ED) – the highest response of the 66 trusts assessed by the Picker Institute Europe.

Patients were asked a series of questions relating to their arrival at the ED, waiting time, doctors and nurses, care and treatment, tests, pain, environment and facilities, leaving the ED, and an overall score for their experience.

Our performance was better in all of the areas when compared with the last time the survey was carried out in 2008.

The RUH received an average overall score of 8.1 out of 10, compared to an average 7.6 for other trusts who took part in the assessment.

Emergency Department Matron Mandy Rumble says: “We are delighted with these results which reflect all of the hard work which goes into delivering emergency care.

“It is particularly pleasing to see that we have improved the experience of patients during a time when we have seen year on year increases in the actual number of patients attending the ED.

“We know that when patients visit the ED they may be worried, distressed, and in pain, and our receptionists, who are trained in customer service, deliver an excellent first impression of the hospital.

“We recognise that there are still too many patients who do not feel they have been given enough privacy when discussing their condition, and this is a national issue which we will continue working to address.”

Along with staff trained to deliver excellent customer service, the ED has booths to enable patients to discuss their condition privately.

In 2011/12, 69,508 patients attended the Emergency Department, with 26,968 being admitted to the hospital. This compares with 66,228 attendances the previous year, and 25,110 admissions.

Picker carried out the Accident and Emergency Department Survey 2012 on behalf of the RUH on a random sample of patients who attended the hospital in January 2012. The report also found that:

- The courtesy of reception staff in the ED at the RUH was rated excellent, very good, or good by 91% of those responding
- 95% of respondents said the Department was clean or very clean, while 87% felt the toilets were clean or very clean
- Doctors and nurses were felt to be working well together – according to 89% of patients who responded
- 86% of patients said they weren't delayed when they were ready to leave the ED
- 85% of respondents felt they had been treated with respect and dignity.

The survey was undertaken by a postal questionnaire sent to patients' home addresses. The questionnaires used in the survey were developed by the NHS Patient Survey Co-ordination Centre.

Of the 813 patients who were sent the survey and eligible to complete it, 323 returned it, giving a response rate of 40%. Of those who responded:

- 46% arrived at the RUH by ambulance
- half indicated this was their only visit to the Emergency Department in the previous year, 39% had been 2-3 times, with 7% coming four or more times.
- around one in three (34%) have previously been to the ED for the same condition or something related.
- 46% said they had a long-standing condition.

Ends

The Accident and Emergency Department Survey 2012 has been published on the NHS Surveys website at www.nhssurveys.org