



Michael Greco
Michael.Greco@cfepsurveys.com.au

32 – Improving Practice Questionnaire - A Patient Feedback Tool for Clinical Governance, Practice Accreditation and Recertification: Where Are We Now?

Michael Greco PhD; BTheol;
Grad.Dip.Teach (Sec); GAICD
Chief Executive, CFEP Surveys

Introduction

The voice of the patient is becoming increasingly recognized as a significant indicator of quality. The patient is envisaged as an important part of developing new services, and ensuring quality improvement across the various levels of the health care system. A recent systematic review published in the BMJ showed that patient experience is linked to clinical effectiveness and patient safety (1).

So how can practices gather robust, valid and reliable data on patient experience? And how can this data be helpful in supporting the practice to improve its quality? The Improving Practice Questionnaire (IPQ) is a patient feedback instrument that combines both the general issues around primary care, such as access, availability of information, preventive care and health promotion, as well as the patient's experience of the clinician's interpersonal skills in the consultation (2).

Spread

The IPQ was extensively used across UK primary care practices (over 4,000) as part of the evidence required for the Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) (3). In Australia, the IPQ is called the Practice Accreditation and Improvement Survey (or PAIS) and has been approved by the RACGP as part of its 4th Edition Quality Standards (commencing 2011) for practice accreditation (4). Over 3,500 Australian practices are involved in using the tool. Several other countries have adopted the tool including New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland.

However, just undertaking a valid and reliable patient survey is not enough. The real challenge begins when healthcare organisations receive their results and reflect on their significance. Research evidence shows that these organisations do better when they build action plans around their results of patient feedback, and even more so, when patients are involved in the proposed improvement strategies. This process has been referred to as 'Critical Friends Groups' (5).

At the individual level, clinicians can receive feedback on their interpersonal skills. In the UK, doctors are using this evidence as part of their requirements for Revalidation (6). In Australia, where revalidation does not yet exist, the IPQ is being utilised by doctors for their CPD requirements. Increasingly, the tool is being linked to Multi-Source Feedback (MSF) which is becoming more widely adopted across health practitioner recertification/revalidation (7).

