



Campaigns

(ONLY) 6%
of in-patients in England were asked
their views while in hospital
on the quality of their care
HEALTHCARE COMMISSION SURVEY 2005

Tell us about your experience of being in hospital

Putting patients first

HEALTHCARE

What's it like to be a patient? Government statistics boast of high satisfaction levels, yet newspapers regularly tell of failure. But these two extremes are only part of the story. For the full picture, you have to go beneath figures and headlines – and ask the people involved what they want from their healthcare and whether their experience matches up to this ideal.

Medical treatment isn't the only

thing that counts. The non-clinical side plays a key role, too, as our report on hospital food (p12) shows. In order to learn more about the experience of being in hospital, we've been asking patients themselves as well as their families and friends to give us their views on the non-clinical aspects of care and treatment. Early results of our research have identified four main areas of concern: wards (including

cleanliness); communication between healthcare professionals; the need to be kept up to date with changes; and caring staff.

We need your help

We're now conducting an online survey to find out what was good – and not so good – about people's hospital experiences. If you have had an overnight stay in hospital, or have visited a close family member or friend in hospital, tell us what you thought. We'll also be asking patient groups and those who work in healthcare for their views. We'll use what you tell us to highlight areas of good practice and those which need improving and to help us in our campaign for a health service that is truly patient focused.

To take part in our survey, or respond to our consultation paper, visit www.which.co.uk/patientexperience. Please make sure you get back to us before 5 January 2007, when this consultation closes.



Attitude of staff can make or break a patient's stay in hospital

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CAMPAIGN NEWS

Sheila McKechnie Award

Dame Sheila McKechnie, director of Which? from 1995 until her death in 2004, was a tireless campaigner. Applications for the awards



named after her are now open. If you are pressing for a better deal for consumers, you could be eligible for a free package of support to help you achieve more in 2007.

Jackie Schneider, who runs the Merton Parents for Better Food in Schools campaign, won the Consumer Action award in 2006, sponsored by Which?. She says: 'Winning an award has had a huge impact. It has opened doors for us and given us access to a wealth of information.' Go to www.sheilamckechnie.org.uk.

Fight on GM continues

New research shows only 29 per cent of people would class food as non-genetically modified if it contained about 1 per cent of GM material, as the government is proposing. Which? continues to lobby the government to ensure consumers can choose between GM and non-GM food.

Walkers crisps lose fat

Two out of three cheers for Walkers for introducing a new range of crisps that isn't high in fat and is low in saturated fat. But at 1.5g per 100g, New Walkers Baked Crisps still contain enough salt to merit a red light under the Food Standards Agency's traffic-light labelling scheme.