NRC+ Picker's Positive Aspects of the Healthcare Experience

Research from the NRC+Picker Institute and Redesign show patients and carers value the following:

- Access to care
- Respect for patient’s values, preferences and expressed needs
- Coordination and integration of care
- Involvement of family and friends
- Emotional support and alleviation of fear and anxiety
- Physical comfort
- Information and education
- Transition and continuity
Access to care

*Patients need to know they can access care when it is needed.*
*Focusing mainly on ambulatory care, the following areas were of importance to the patient:*

- Access to the location of health services
- Availability of transportation
- Ease of scheduling appointments
- Availability of appointments when needed
- Accessibility to specialists or specialty services when a referral is made
- Clear instructions provided on when and how to get referrals

Respect for patients values, preferences, and expressed needs

*Patients indicate a need to be recognized and treated as individuals by hospital staff. They are concerned with their illnesses and conditions and want to be kept informed.*

- An atmosphere respectful of the individual patient should focus on quality of life
- Involve the patient in medical decisions
- Provide the patient with dignity, and respect a patient’s autonomy

Coordination and integration of care

*Patients report feeling vulnerable and powerless in the face of illness. Proper coordination of care can ease those feelings. Patients identified three areas in which care coordination can reduce feelings of vulnerability:*

- Coordination of clinical care
- Coordination of ancillary and support services
- Coordination of front-line patient care

Information and education

*Patients express fear information is being withheld from them and staff is not being completely honest about their condition and prognosis. Based on patient interviews, hospitals can focus on three communication items to reduce these fears:*

- Information on clinical status, progress and prognosis
- Information on processes of care
- Information to facilitate autonomy and self-care and health promotion
Transition and continuity

Patients often express considerable anxiety about their ability to care for themselves after discharge. Meeting patient needs in this area requires staff to:

- Provide understandable, detailed information regarding medications, physical limitations, dietary needs, etc
- Coordinate and plan ongoing treatment and services after discharge
- Provide information regarding access to clinical, social, physical and financial support on a continuing basis

Physical comfort

The level of physical comfort patients report has a tremendous impact on their experience. Three areas were reported as particularly important to patients:

- Pain management
- Assistance with activities and daily living needs
- Hospital surroundings and environment

Emotional support and alleviation of fear and anxiety

Fear and anxiety associated with illness can be as debilitating as the physical effects. Caregivers should pay particular attention to:

- Anxiety over physical status, treatment and prognosis
- Anxiety over the impact of the illness on themselves and family
- Anxiety over the financial impact of illness

Involvement of family and friends

Patients continually addressed the role of family and friends in the patient experience, and often expressed concern about the impact illness has on family and friends. Family dimensions of patient-centered care were identified as follows:

- Providing accommodations for family and friends
- Involving family and close friends in decision making
- Supporting family members as caregivers
- Recognising the needs of family and friends