

Best Practices for High Patient Ratings



A Johns Hopkins study finds that simple, low-tech practices can make a big difference in improving patient ratings for hospitals. The findings have been published in the journal *Medical Care*.

Some of the key findings of the study include:

* Hospitals can improve patient experience by ensuring they do simple things like ongoing rounds by nurses and hospital leadership.

* High-ranking hospitals usually employ a few basic practices. These include following a consistent approach, focusing on personal interactions with patients and promoting a culture that requires involvement of all levels of caregivers and services.

This study identifies a handful of best practices that are more likely to give patients a positive hospital experience and a sense of satisfaction. The results are based on participant responses to questionnaires as well as letters that were sent to CEOs and medical personnel including nursing and administrative leaders. The Johns Hopkins team identified 169 U.S. hospitals with a "top ranking" or a "most improved" designation based on their scores on the December 2012 Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey. Around 33 percent of the hospitals included in the survey had 500 beds or more while 37 percent had less than 200 beds. Approximately half of the surveyed hospitals were teaching hospitals.

The findings show that nearly 77 percent of the respondents reported that a commitment to the patient and family was a part of their culture and a key reason for their high performance.

"It's not just about getting the physicians involved, or the nurses," says lead study author Hanan Aboumatar, M.D., M.P.H., an assistant professor of medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and a member of the Johns Hopkins Armstrong Institute for Patient Safety and Quality. "Everyone involved at the hospital, all the way up to top leadership, has to place a high priority on the needs of patients and their families."

Prof. Aboumatar also notes that if leaders and staff members do not prioritise this commitment, they can lose sight of the core objective and lose their rating in the eyes of the patients. He also highlights that responsiveness is a critical element. Proactive rounds where nurses visited individual patients periodically and asked them a set of specific questions also helps improve patient satisfaction. Leader rounds also serve the same purpose and are a frequent practice in top hospitals. High-ranked hospitals also promote specific activities or behaviours such as making eye contact with their patients, sitting at patients' bedsides etc. In short, commitment and the application of a set of principles can go a long way in improving the hospital's rating and perception in the eyes of the patient.

Source: Johns Hopkins Medicine
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