

St Paul's Medical Centre Patient Survey 2012

Introduction

There was a very promising attendance at the last St Paul's Patient Reference Group, and there was a lively discussion about the results of the last national patient survey, and how we could make better use of modern communications technology. The minutes of the meeting can be viewed on our website at www.stpaulspcc.co.uk within the Patient Involvement section.

The outcome of the meeting was that there were several key areas we needed to find further information about from patients. These were:

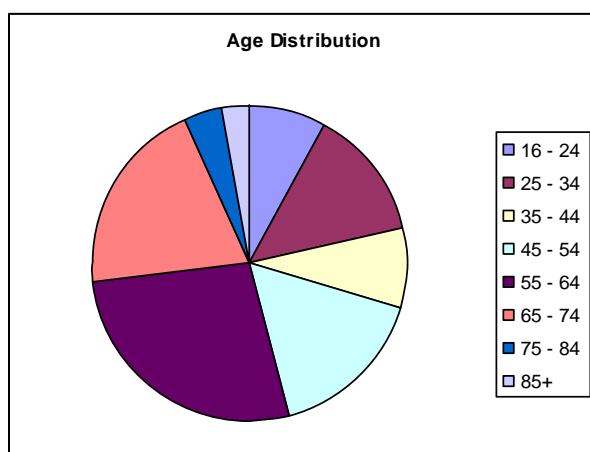
- ✓ What kinds of modern communications technology do our patients use, and which would they prefer us to offer?
- ✓ How can we improve patients' confidence in dealing with their long-term conditions?

It was agreed that trying to find this information at once would create a lengthy and cumbersome questionnaire. We therefore decided to create two questionnaires, one to address the first issue and to be available for any patient to complete, and the second to address the second issue and to be completed only to those patients who suffer from a long-term condition.

The surveys were carried out during September and October, and were available in the Medical Centre and via the website. A member of the PRG kindly translated the questionnaires into an online form format. The results are shown below.

Survey 1 – Technology

A total of 76 questionnaires were completed. All of these were in the surgery, and unfortunately nobody used the online version. We tried to ensure that patients from a range of ages and circumstances were included as shown in the charts below.

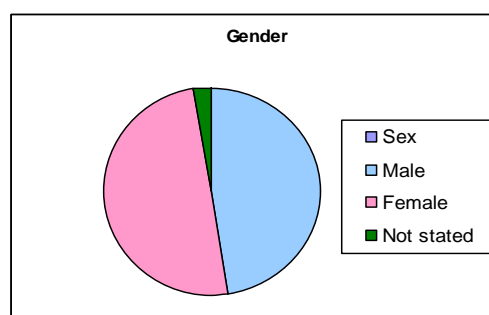


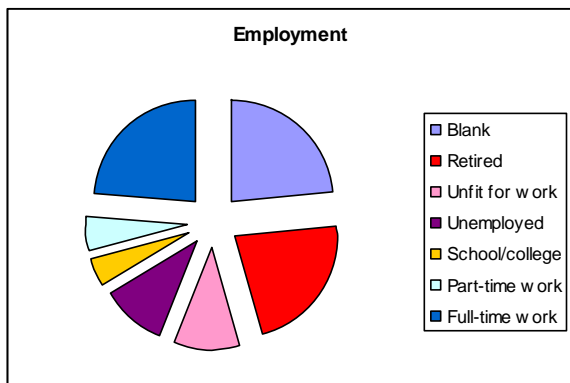
We had a good split of patients in the older age groups, but fewer younger patients.

However, this does reflect the fact that older patients tend to be more frequent users of healthcare services.

Here we can see that half of the respondents were female.

A few patients chose not to complete the 'About You' section and so we do not know whether they were male or female.



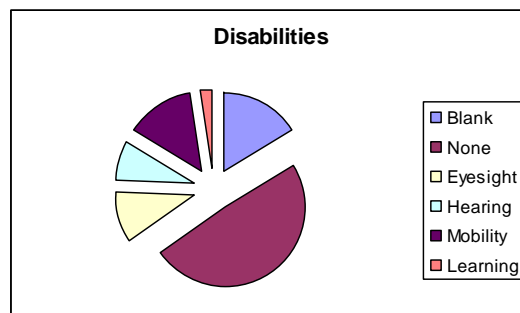


The survey respondents came from a range of occupations. As one would expect from the age distribution, almost half of the group were retired (most of the 'blank' returns were from patients of retirement age).

The majority of respondents were white British with only one non-British respondent. This reflects the practice population. Five respondents were carers for an elderly or vulnerable adult.

Only a relatively small number of respondents stated that they had a disability, as shown in the chart.

Surprisingly, of the 12 people who stated they had a mobility problem, only 1 requested downstairs-only appointments. A booking alert has been placed on the notes to make sure this happens



The first group of technology questions was about the use of TEXTING. 68% of respondents indicated that they regularly use text messaging, and of these 79% said they would like to receive appointment reminders by text, and 73% said they would like to be able to cancel appointments by text.

In 19% of cases, someone other than the respondent had access to their texts, but this did not deter them from wishing to use text for appointment reminders or cancelling appointments.

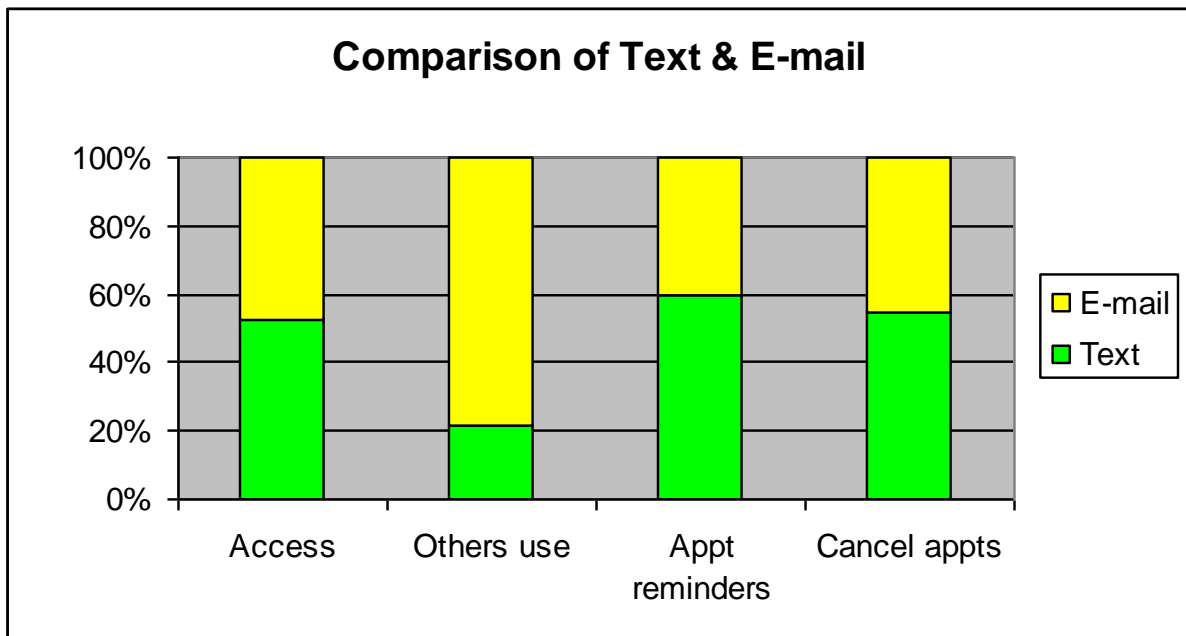
A concern for the practice would be keeping the mobile number up-to-date, especially if the 'phone is changed regularly. However, most patients (79%) do not change their phone frequently. 11% do change every 6 – 12 months and a further 6% even more frequently.

In terms of INTERNET use, only 60% of respondents reported that they have easy access to the internet and of these only 39% currently order their prescriptions via the practice website.

Well over half the patients with access to the internet (61%) would like to be able to book and cancel appointments online.

The chart overleaf compares the responses between use of text and use of e-mail. This shows that more patients would like to use text than e-mail. E-mail also appears to be much less secure in terms of confidentiality, given that other people have access to far more of the e-mails than the texts.

It was interesting to note that while 68% of patients with access to the internet stated that they would be keen to complete online forms, there were none received by that method for this particular survey.

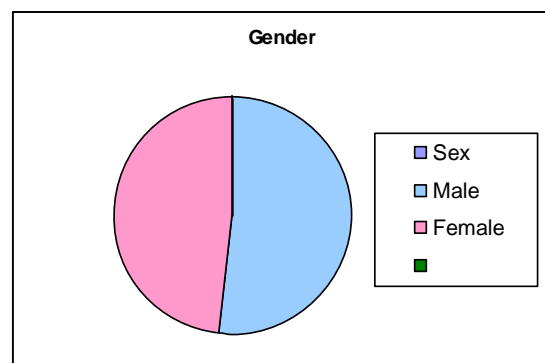
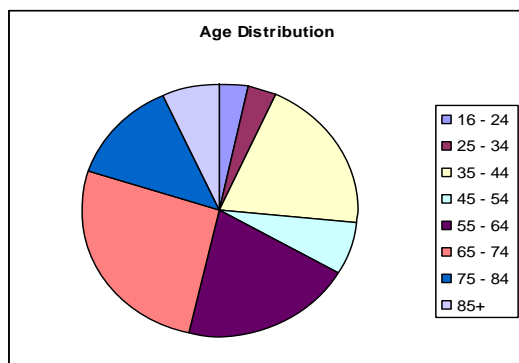


Only just over a third of patients (35%) with access to the internet use FACEBOOK. Of these, approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ (67%) would like to receive Facebook notifications about surgery news. Only 19% of respondents were interested in taking part in an online blog as a way of giving their views about practice services.

Survey 2 – Long Term Conditions

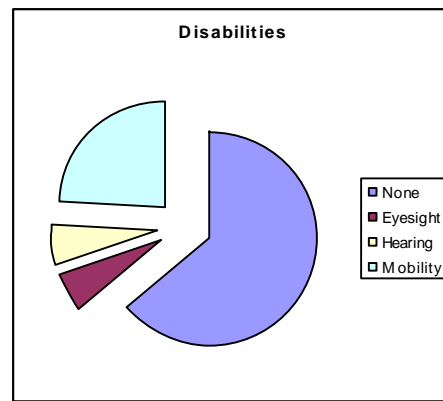
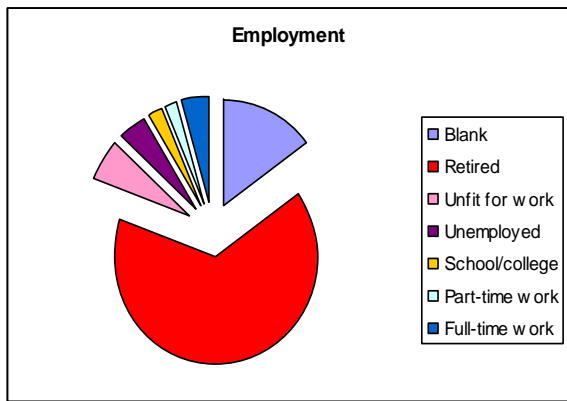
We were only able to obtain 31 completed questionnaires for this survey. However, many of the respondents had more than one long-term condition and were able to comment on these separately.

Again we aimed for a good distribution of respondents as shown in these charts.

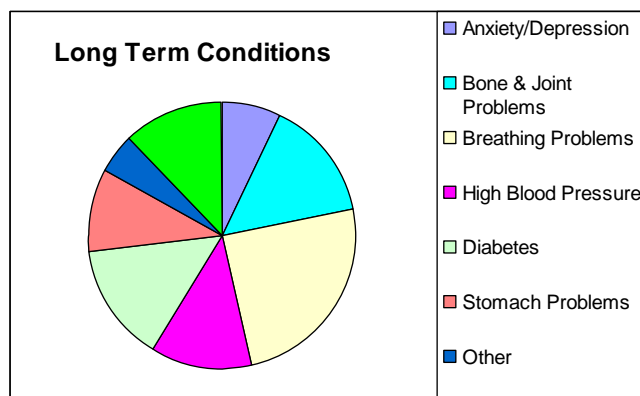


The age distribution was skewed towards the older age groups. This is expected as people tend to suffer are more likely to suffer from long-term conditions as they get older.

An analysis of the respondents' occupations and disabilities is given overleaf. The vast majority of patients recorded no disability.



The range of long-term conditions listed by respondents is shown below. A small number of respondents listed 2 or 3 conditions but the level of confidence rarely varied for different conditions for the same respondent.



The questionnaire asked respondents to comment on their level of confidence in managing their condition generally, more specifically regarding medications and what to do in a 'crisis' and whether they attended for regular reviews.

In most cases patients appeared to have good levels of confidence, which appeared to improve the longer the patient had the condition.

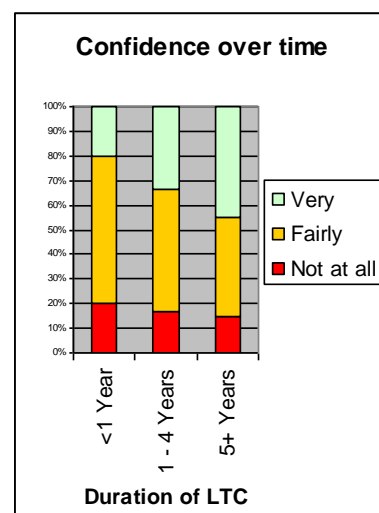
The picture was very similar across the range of questions.

A few respondents had written comments about why they felt confident (or not), and the things that seemed to improve confidence included:

- Good interaction with the doctor & nurse
- Understanding of trigger factors & medications
- Knowing the medication is effective
- Having written information

Factors that seemed to impair confidence included:

- Not being able to access regular reviews
- Condition not stable



The vast majority of patients (85%) assessed the amount of information provided by the practice to be 'about right' and were not able to suggest improvements. Only 1 respondent commented that there was insufficient information, while 2 claimed that too much information was provided.

Surprisingly, not a single respondent had heard of the Expert Patient Programme.

Discussion

It was perhaps not surprising that more people had access to text messaging than to the internet. It was also understandable that texts would be a more popular means for appointment reminders than e-mail, given that texts appear to be more secure in confidentiality terms, as they are less likely to be shared than e-mails.

It would be interesting to know why so few patients who do have easy internet access use this to order their repeat medications. Of course, some of the respondents would not be taking regular medications and therefore would have no need to use this service.

While the lack of enthusiasm for the use of social networking sites and blogs is a little discouraging, the old adage that 'supply creates its own demand' could well be true in this case, meaning that if the service were to be provided, people may start to see the advantages of using it.

Moreover, this may give us the opportunity to hear the views of our younger patients and 'harder to reach groups' who may be unwilling or unable to attend meetings, but are accustomed to online surveys and blogs.

With regard to managing long-term conditions, the high level of confidence expressed was a little surprising given that this had been an area of relative weakness in the national patient survey

Over 60 patients indicated that they would be willing to give further comments when the survey results had been collated. A copy of the report was therefore sent by post (41) or e-mail (22) asking for feedback on any aspect of the survey, but in particular:

1. What do you think are the barriers to existing internet users taking advantage of the online repeat medication ordering system?
2. What types of information do you think we should include in a Facebook page?
3. How can we encourage patients to take part in future surveys?
4. Do you agree that the Expert Patient Programme should be more widely promoted?
5. Are there any other measures we should be taking to improve patients' confidence in dealing with their long-term conditions?

Unfortunately, only one respondent replied. His suggestions have been used, along with the initial survey results, to construct the following action plan:

ACTION	LEAD	DUE DATE
Advertise surveys in advance to improve response	Anne Bagot-Moore	TBA
Ensure online prescription ordering allows for patients to give extra information, e.g. ordering earlier or greater quantities because of holidays	Anne Bagot-Moore	31/03/2013
Ensure patients' confidence in managing their long-term conditions is assessed and recorded as part of the annual review.	Anne Bagot-Moore	31/03/2013