

# Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture

## **Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture (HSOPSC): An Introduction**

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### **What Is the HSOPSC?**

- Survey from hospital staff's perspective
- It can be completed by all types of staff, from housekeeping and security to nurses and physicians.

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### **Survey Background**

The HSOPSC was sponsored by the Medical Errors Workgroup of the QuIC, funded by AHRQ, and developed by Westat.

- QuIC: Quality Interagency Coordination Task Force that consists of representatives from 11 federal agencies
- AHRQ: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality is the lead federal agency charged with conducting and supporting research to improve patient safety and health care quality for all Americans.
- Westat: A statistical survey research corporation that serves agencies of the U.S. government, as well as businesses, foundations, and state and local governments.

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### **Survey Development**

- A review of the literature and existing safety culture tools
- Interviews with hospital staff
- Cognitive testing
- Input/comment from researchers and healthcare stakeholders
- Pilot-tested with over 1,400 respondents from 21 hospitals

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### **Why Survey?**

- Raise awareness about patient safety issues
- Diagnose the current status of safety culture
- Evaluate specific patient safety interventions or programs
- Conduct internal and external benchmarking
- Track change over time
- Fulfill Participation Agreement requirement

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### **Why the AHRQ Survey?**

- Free
- Hospital-wide
- Reliable and valid
- Promotes benchmarking

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### **Modifications**

Modifications are possible; however, take care not to affect the reliability or validity of the survey.

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### **How Long Does it Take?**

- There are 51 items to be answered
- Approximately 10 minutes to complete
- Most of the items use:
  - Agree/Disagree, or
  - Never/Always responses
- Written comments can be added at the end of the survey.

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### **What Areas Are Covered?**

- **Unit-level Safety Areas Covered**
  - Overall perceptions of safety
  - Frequency of events reported
  - Supervisor/manager expectations & actions promoting patient safety
  - Organizational learning—continuous improvement
  - Teamwork within units
  - Communication openness
  - Feedback & communication about error
  - Nonpunitive response to error
  - Staffing

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### **What Areas Are Covered?**

- **Hospital-level Safety Areas Covered**
  - Hospital Management Support for Patient Safety
  - Teamwork Across Hospital Units
  - Hospital Handoffs and Transitions

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### **What Areas Are Covered?**

- **Outcomes**
  - Overall Perceptions of Safety
  - Frequency of Event Reporting
  - Patient Safety Grade (of the Hospital Unit)
  - Number of Events Reported

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### **What Areas Are Covered?**

- **Hospital-wide Safety Areas Covered**
  - Hospital management support for patient safety
  - Teamwork across hospital units
  - Hospital handoffs & transitions
- There are also two other questions that ask about:
  - The patient safety “grade” the respondent would assign their work area/unit.
  - The number of events the respondent has reported in last 12 months.

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# Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture

## Benchmarking Results

- Hospitals wanting to compare their hospital's patient safety culture survey results to those of other hospitals can use the comparative results in the [Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture: 2008 Comparative Database Report](#) as one basis for comparison in their efforts to establish, improve, and maintain a culture of patient safety in their institutions.

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## Administration Statistics

- The 2008 database consists of data from 160,176 hospital staff respondents across 519 participating hospitals.
- The average hospital response rate was 54 percent, with an average of 309 completed surveys per hospital.
- Most hospitals (48 percent) **administered paper surveys, which resulted in higher response rates (60 percent) compared to web (44 percent)** or mixed mode surveys (52 percent).
- Most hospitals (70 percent) administered the survey to all staff or a sample of all staff from all hospital departments.

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## Characteristics of Participating Hospitals

- Bed Size
- Teaching Status
- Ownership
- Region

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## Characteristics of Respondents

- There are 160,176 hospital staff respondents from 519 hospitals.
- One-third of respondents (33 percent) selected "Other" as their work area, followed by "Surgery" (10 percent), "Medicine" (9 percent), and "Many different hospital units/No specific unit" (9 percent).
- Over one-third of respondents (36 percent) selected "Registered Nurse" or "Licensed Vocational Nurse/Licensed Practical Nurse (LVN/LPN)" as their staff position, followed by "Other" (22 percent), and "Technician (e.g., EKG, Lab, Radiology)" (11 percent).
- Most respondents (77 percent) indicated they had direct interaction with patients

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## Results

- Teamwork Within Units—79% indicating this is an area of strength for most hospitals.
- Nonpunitive Response to Error—44% indicating this is an area with potential for improvement for most hospitals.
- The survey item with the lowest average percent positive response (36 percent) was: "Staff worry that mistakes they make are kept in their personnel file" (an average of only 36 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed with this item).
- Adverse Event Reporting—52% had reported no events in their hospital over the past 12 months. It is likely that this represents under-reporting of events and was identified as an area for improvement for most hospitals

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## Decisions

- Who
- When
- How
- What

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# Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture

## Who Will You Survey?

- Hospital staff who have direct contact or interaction with patients (clinical staff, such as nurses, or nonclinical staff, such as unit clerks)
- Hospital staff who may not have direct contact or interaction with patients but whose work directly affects patient care (staff in units such as pharmacy, laboratory/pathology)
- Hospital-employed physicians who spend most of their work hours in the hospital (emergency department physicians, hospitalists, pathologists)
- Hospital supervisors, managers, and administrators

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## Who Will You Survey? (Continued)

- The size of your sample will depend on whom you want to survey and your available resources.
- The more staff you survey, the more likely you are to adequately represent your population.
- Average response rate: 30%–50%

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## Who Will You Survey? (Continued)

- Simple random versus systematic sample  
Simple random sampling involves selecting staff randomly, such that each staff member has an equal chance of being selected. Systematic sampling essentially involves selecting every  $N$ th person from a population list

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## When Will You Administer the Survey?

- In the first half of 2009
  - Hospitals already administering the survey need not survey
  - Plan for at least 10 weeks from the beginning of the project to the end of data collection.

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## How Will You Survey?

- Distribution and return
- Data collection process
- Web-based survey process

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## Web-based Survey Pros

- Inexpensive
- Fewer human resources needed
- Easy to administer and complete
- No copying, data entry, or major data clean-up
- Ease of repeated use for hospitals
- Anonymous

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## Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture

### Web-based Survey Cons

- Computer access
  - Centralized PC kiosks available to employee
- Need to follow up with non-responders
  - Print page of completion
  - HSAG can monitor the number of respondents
- Time to log onto computer and complete the survey

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### What To Do To Ensure Higher Respondent Rates

- CEO message, support, and involvement
- Hospital-wide incentive (goal and reward)
- Prize drawing
- Results will be shared with all staff
- Improvement interventions to be developed and implemented based on survey results
- Provide computer access

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### HSAG's Support of the Survey Process

- Assist with a customized approach
- Create the Web-based survey tool
- Meet with implementation team
- Provide suggestions for best practice
  - Aim for a return rate of 80%–100%
  - Track number of respondents
- Provide report summary

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### Next Steps

- Form a project team
  - Develop an implementation plan
  - Select a sample
  - Establish contact persons
  - Prepare materials
  - Distribute materials
  - Track response rates

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### Users Guide

- <http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/hospculture/usergd.htm#Contents>
  - **Getting Started** provides information on planning the project, outlines major decisions and tasks in a task timeline, and discusses hiring a vendor and forming a project team.
  - **Selecting a Sample** describes the process of selecting a suitable sample group from your staff.
  - **Determining Your Data Collection Methods** outlines decisions about how surveys will be sent and returned and discusses the importance of establishing points-of-contact within the hospital.
  - **Establishing Data Collection Procedures** suggests techniques for maximizing your response rate, discusses the importance of protecting confidentiality, and outlines survey materials to be assembled.
  - **Conducting a Web-based Survey** presents the pros and cons of using a Web-based survey approach to data collection and outlines special considerations that must be taken into account.
  - **Preparing and Analyzing Data, and Producing Reports** discusses the steps needed to prepare the data and analyze the responses and provides suggestions for producing feedback reports.

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## Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture

*Over 1 million drug-related injuries occur every year in health care settings. The Institute of Medicine estimates that at least a quarter of these injuries are preventable.*

**To find out how to prevent medication errors, go to**  
<http://www.hsag.com/drugsafety/>.



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