

A STUDY INTO PATIENT SATISFACTION ON THE NHS 111 CALL SERVICE AT NEWHAM HOSPITAL

1. Acknowledgements

1.1 I would like to express my utmost gratitude to all those who helped us throughout the conduct of this audit, especially Dr.Jim for guiding us in the process of the audit and not to forget all the helpful and kind medical and non-medical staffs at Newham Hospital that helped us so much.Last but not least, we would like to thank all the patients who were willing to spare some time to answer our questionnaires, allowing us to complete this audit.

2. Aim

2.1 To evaluate patient satisfaction with the NHS 111 call service and how does it affect the patient satisfaction as a whole of the GP out of hours service at Newham University Hospital.

3. Introduction

3.1 This audit was undertaken at the GP-Coop in Newham University Hospital by three medical students from Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry. According to NHS England, clinical audit aims to improve the quality of care and service in a clinical setting where it garner's positive outcomes for the patients.

3.2 Newham University Hospital is part of the Barts Health NHS Trust which is situated in East London. The hospital covers the borough of Newham, serving 308000 people. The Newham General A&E is the only emergency department in the borough hence why the out of hours GP service was established, to reduce the burden on the A&E department.

3.3 The NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day throughout the week and it provides medical advice to patients who are not in an emergency situation.

3.4 Out of hours services are initiatives to provide access to healthcare when GP surgeries are closed, typically between 6.30 pm and 8.00 am. The out of hours service in Newham is run by a GP cooperative, a non - profit making organisation

3.5 This study has been carried out to identify whether people are aware of the NHS 111 call service and If so, is this service efficient and effective in serving the patients needs.

The main objectives of this audit are to;

1. To investigate the extent to which the NHS 111 service benefits patients
2. To investigate patient satisfaction with the 111 service including the initial call and the call back waiting time.
3. Identify areas which can be improved to provide a better care for patients

4. Methodology

4.1 To address the aim and the objectives of our audit, our group decided that both quantitative and qualitative data should be collected. The questionnaire was developed as a semi-formal interview as it encompassed closed-ended questions that contained ordered set of answers to choose from and as well as open questions to obtain more specific patients views and suggestions.

4.2 The questionnaire had three main components, with the first one being about the patient's personal information like age, sex, etc. The second component was about patients awareness about the NHS 111 service, to engage on how the patient was referred to the out of hours GP service at the Newham Hospital and patient satisfaction with the initial call and the call back time. Patient satisfaction was assessed by asking patient's to rate the service by choosing one of the following choices: very satisfied, satisfied, unsatisfied and very unsatisfied. The final component gave patients the opportunity to comment on the service and to give suggestions to improve the service. A copy of the questionnaire is attached(Appendix 1)

4.3 A total of 54 patients that were coming to the GP Coop at the Newham Hospital regardless of whether being referred to by the A&E department, GP streaming or through the NHS 11 service, all of the patients were given questionnaires to assess their satisfaction with their most recent experience of the NHS 111 call service.

4.4 Data collection period was for about a week; from 21 February to 28 February. Questionnaires were given to the receptionist to give them out to patients who were referred to the out of hours GP service at Newham Hospital. The receptionist was contacted frequently to be reminded to give out the questionnaires.

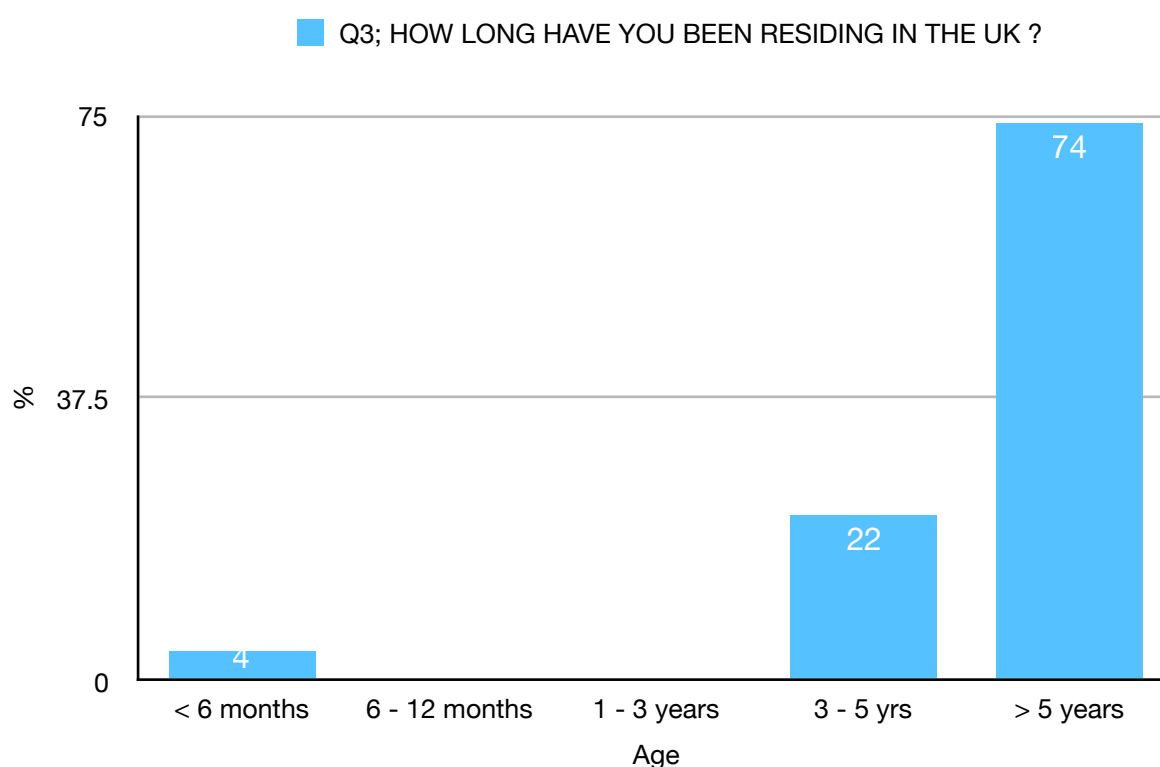
5. Ethical considerations

5.1 Patient confidentiality was maintained throughout the audit by which all patients surveyed were kept anonymous. Each patient gave consent prior to being interviewed. When asking staff for help, consideration was taken as to whether it was an ideal time for them, so as to not compromise patient care.

6. Results

6.1 A total of 54 patients were involved in the study. Of the patients that took part in the study, 59% of them were female and that leaves with 41% male. 30% of the patients were below 18 years old and only 7% is above the age of 60. The dominant group that took part in the study were in the age group of 19 - 30 years, constituting 33%.

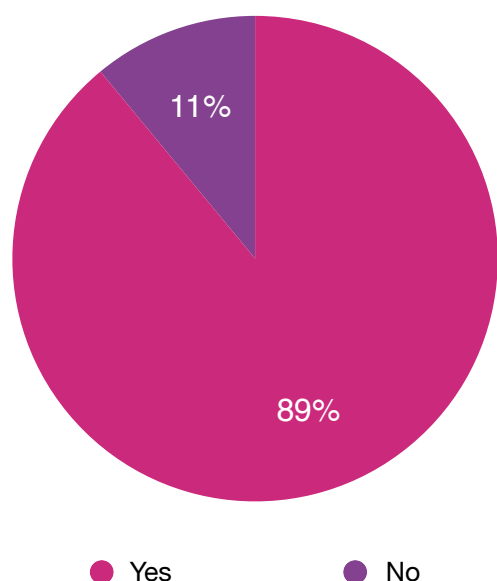
6.2 Question 3: “How long have you been residing in the UK?”



Patients were asked for how long they have been living in the UK and the majority of patients have been living in the UK for more than 5 years(74%). A significant number of patients have been living in the UK for 3- 5 years(22%) and a small number for less than 6 months(4%). The reason why we decided to come up with this question was to gauge whether the period of stay in the UK would actually affect the awareness of the patients of the NHS 111 call service. True enough two patients, who have been living in the UK for only less than 6 months were not aware of the 111 call service and commented; “ I am not aware of the 111 service and not used to the GP system in the UK”.

6.3 Question 4: “Are you aware of the NHS 111 service?”

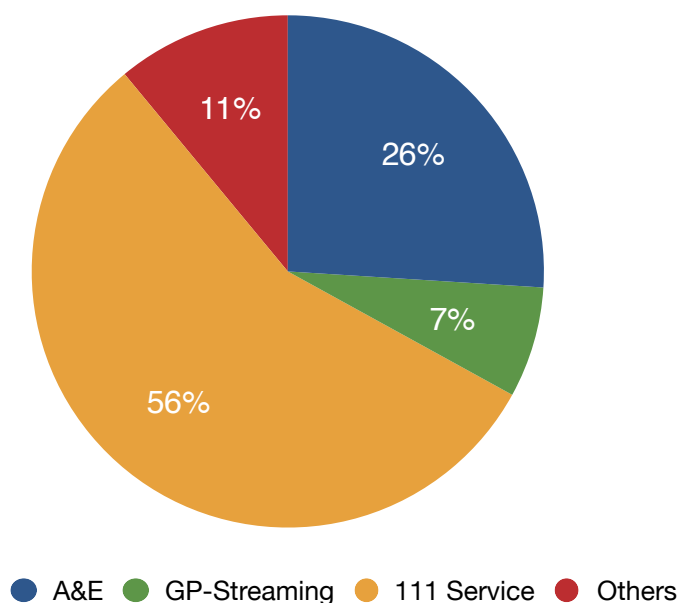
Q4; ARE YOU AWARE OF THE 111 SERVICE ?



Patients were asked If they were aware of the 111 service and it can be seen that most of them were aware(89%) with only a small number being not conscious of the service(11%).

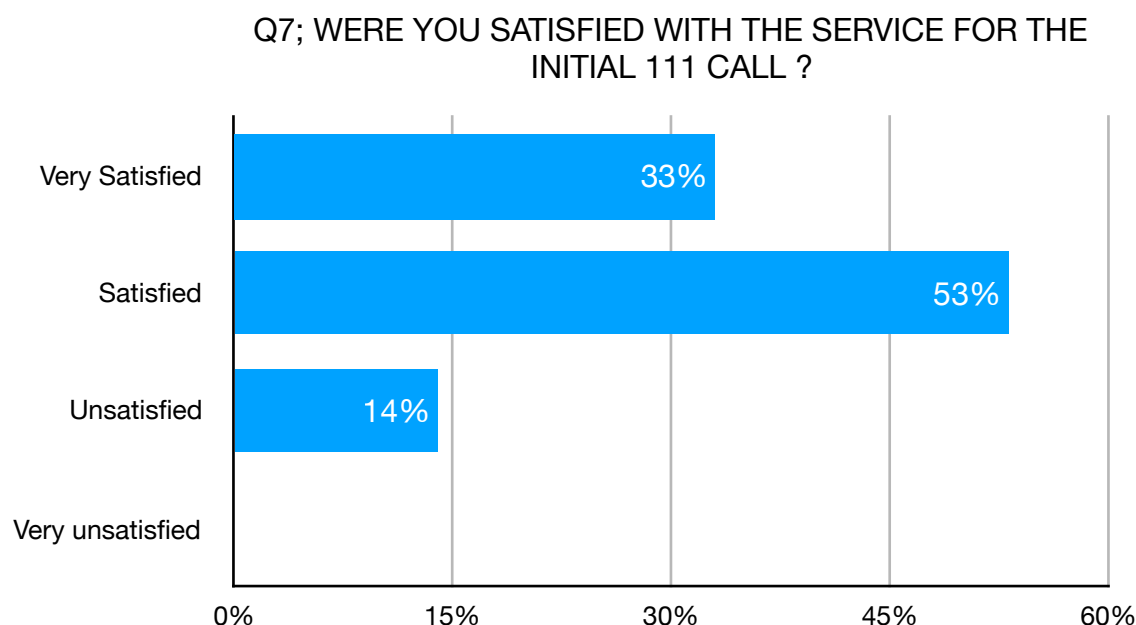
6.4 Question 5: “How were you referred to the out of hours GP service at Newham Hospital?”

Q5; HOW WERE YOU REFERRED TO THE OUT OF HOURS GP SERVICE AT NEWHAM HOSPITAL?



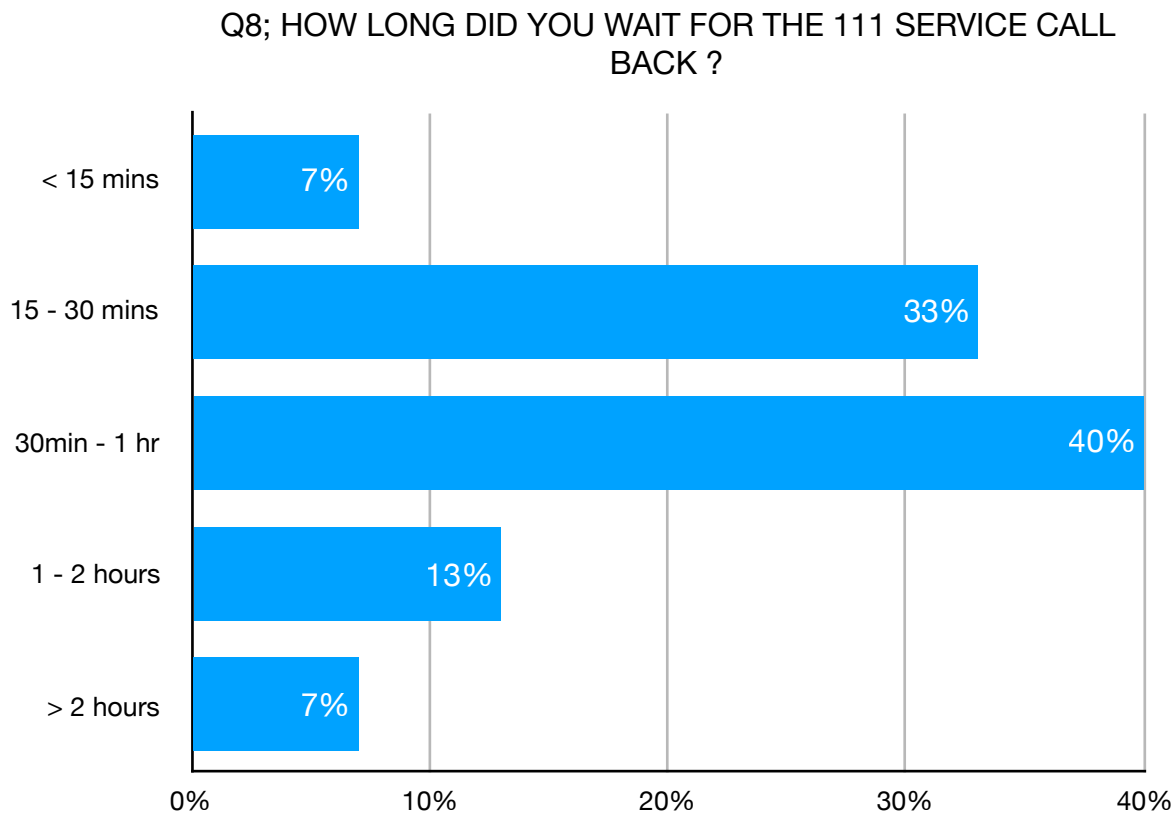
Patients were asked on how they were referred to the out of hours GP service at Newham Hospital and the greater group were referred through the NHS 111 service(56%) and a notable number coming from A&E(26%). A small number of patients are directed to the GP service through the GP-streaming. The remaining 7% of the patients came in after calling in the GP-Coop at Newham Hospital directly.

6.5 Question 7: “Were you satisfied with the service for thr initial 111 call?”



Majority of the patients were satisfied with the initial call and a significant number being very satisfied with the service. The initial call is usually answered by one of the NHS 111 team members who are nurses or trained advisers. This proves that the NHS 111 team member are good communicators and are highly trained and professional. The 14% of patients that were unsatisfied were mostly patients that had language barriers; this was proven when we had interviews with most of these patients.

6.6 Question 8: “How long did you wait for the 111 service call back?”



Most of the patients were called back within 30 to 60 minutes with the second largest proportion of patients being called back within 15 to 30 minutes. Patients are usually advised that it may take up to an hour to be called back. Only 20% of the patients were called back after an hour.

7. Discussion

7.1 Evaluation

This study only looked at patient satisfaction with the NHS 111 service in a single borough, Newham, during the out of hours GP service care at Newham Hospital. The total sample size was satisfactory but could be improved to provide a more accurate representation of patient satisfaction with the 111 service. One of the main reasons we only managed to get a total of 54 patients to answer the survey was because of the shortage of time. We only had about a week to gather responses from patients and we also realised that on certain days, the number of patients in the GP-Coop were only a handful. For example, on the 26th February, during our visit to the GP-Coop from 7.00pm to 10.00pm, there were only 12 patients that came in to see the GP, hence why our patient response was limited. This audit also looked at only one aspect of the out of hours GP service(111 service) and it would have been feasible to look at patient satisfaction with services in the A&E department, walk-in centres or even with a community nurse.

7.2 Interpretation of Results

7.2.1 Vast majority of patients coming in to access the out of hours GP service are of the age group 0 - 30 years. This could be due to a number of reasons, mainly being because of work for the adults or lectures and school activities for students. Parents may also not be able to bring their children in during the normal hours as they are busy with work. This hence indicates the need for the NHS 111 call service as it reduces the burden on the A&E department, whereby the GP can decide what medical help you may need, and If not necessary, to just take paracetamol for example.

7.2.2 Findings from this audit shows that 89% of the patients are aware of the NHS 111 service and of this 89%, 86% of them were generally satisfied with the service provided by the 111 service.

7.2.3 Our findings also show that only 14% of the patients were not satisfied with the 111 call service and this was mainly due to language barriers as some of the patients could not really comprehend information given and asked by the nurse, therefore, affecting the assessment of the patient's condition and past medical history.

7.2.4 Most patients only had to wait for 15-30 minutes or 30 to 60 minutes for the call back from the GP which proves that the out of hours GP service at Newham Hospital is efficient. However, a small proportion of patients only received a call back after an hour and this certainly could be due to the high number of calls from patients with only a few GP's to manage them. Besides that, GP's are compelled to call back patients who are relatively in need of urgent medical advice.

7.2.5 From the patient interview, most patients were happy with the waiting time, which typically last from 15 to 20 minutes. However, this is not always the case as on certain days, as the GP-Coop gets crowded with patients, waiting time may significantly be longer. One of the patients interviewed was dissatisfied with her waiting time, as even though she was there early, patients who came in later were called in to see the GP first. It was noted that patients didn't mind having to wait for a longer time as they were happy with the kind treatment they received from the staff and the quality of treatment provided by clinicians makes the wait worthwhile.

8. Patient feedback and comments from questionnaire and interview

8.1 Positive comments

- very happy with service
- great service
- very good service
- excellent service

8.2 Suggestions and improvements

- need more doctors
- let patients know of waiting times
- prioritize patients in an emergency when giving appointments
- provide more efficient service
- It would be good to have specific time slots to see GP and to be given an indication of how long the wait might be
- reduction in waiting times
- more appointment slots

9. Comparison with other research

9.1 A study led by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health in partnership with NHS England in 2015 involving a total of 1000 service users in North West London revealed that 93% of them felt listened to and 80% said they would use the NHS 111 service in the future if the same problem is to arise. (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2015/12/nhs-111-survey/>) The study showed a high overall satisfaction from patients and users of the service and was evident that the objective of setting up the NHS 111 service was met.

10. Further research

10.1 This study can be explored further in the future by looking at how GP-streaming aims to improve patient care and perhaps measure patient awareness of other out of hours GP services like the walk-in centres and community nurses.

11. Conclusion

11.1 The aim of the audit was to look at patient satisfaction with the NHS 111 call service. From the study, the information gathered qualitatively and quantitatively generally provides an overview that the patients were satisfied with the 111 service. The results from the audit strongly suggest that a change in the service provided by the out of hours GP service team is not necessary.

Further consideration of the suggestions and improvements commented by patients would be effective to improve the care provided as a whole thus enhancing patient satisfaction, the definite goal of the NHS as a whole.

11.2 Recommendations

11.2.1 *Patient Outlook Changes*

All patients can be given information leaflets on the NHS 111 service during an appointment to increase awareness among the community and perhaps another leaflet about the different types of out of hours care services, giving patients a wider option to choose the service they would like to access. This may also help to reduce the burden on the A&E department and as well as the number of calls received through 111 as some patients with less serious problem might prefer to visit the walk-in centres for example.

11.2.2 *Health Care Management Changes*

- Consider offering additional appointment slots during the out of hours service
- Give patients an approximate indication of how long the waiting time is going to be
- Possibly gain support from a nurse specialist;
 - to provide support for doctors as to help reduce lengthy consultations
 - managing patients that have no serious medical conditions and undemanding needs
 - drug prescription depending on the seriousness of medical condition and knowledge and skills of nursing staff

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APPENDIX

1. Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire

Patient Satisfaction Survey at Newham Hospital on the 111 call service

We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to answer these questions related to the 111 call service.

Please tick the appropriate answers, and return this form back to the reception staff. Thank you!

1. Age

- ☐ 0 -18
- ☐ 19- 30 years
- ☐ 31 - 45 years
- ☐ 46 - 60 years
- ☐ Above 60 years

2. Sex

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

3. How long have you been residing in the UK?

- ☐ Less than 6 months
- ☐ 6 – 12 months
- ☐ 1 – 3 years
- ☐ 3 – 5 years
- ☐ More than 5 years

4. Are you aware of the 111 service?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. How were you referred to the out of hours GP service at Newham Hospital?

- ☐ From A&E
- ☐ Through the walk-in GP streaming
- ☐ Through 111 service (--> go to Q7)
- ☐ Others: _____

6. Why did you not call 111 before coming to the GP service?

7. Were you satisfied with the service for the initial 111 call?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Unsatisfied
- ☐ Very unsatisfied

8. How long did you wait for the 111 service call-back from the doctor?

- ☐ Less than 15 min
- ☐ 15-30 min
- ☐ 30 min – 1 hour
- ☐ 1-2 hours
- ☐ More than 2 hours

9. What advice did you receive through the 111 service?

10. Comments or Improvements you would like to share on the services you have received today.

2. Patient responses to Question 9: "What advice did you receive through the 111 service?"

- to go to A&E
- to come to GP at Newham Hospital
- to attend an appointment at the GP Coop
- to take antibiotics
- to take paracetamol