

Methodology

Press Ganey's emergency department survey gives patients who have been treated and released from emergency departments the opportunity to provide feedback about their stay. The survey is used by emergency departments across the United States to improve the quality of the service and care they deliver. Highly valid and reliable, Press Ganey's survey consists of thirty-one standard questions organized into eight sections: Arrival, Nurses, Doctors, Tests, Family or Friends, Personal/Insurance Information, Personal Issues, and Overall Assessment. Data discussed in this report—including data on time spent in the ED—are patient-reported.

Survey Distribution

Surveys are sent to patients shortly after they visit the emergency department, while the experience is still fresh in their mind. Only patients who are discharged from the emergency department receive a questionnaire; those admitted to the hospital are not eligible for an emergency department survey. Upon receipt by Press Ganey, completed surveys are processed and added to a national database. Press Ganey complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which establishes national standards for the security and privacy of health data.

Definition and Calculation of Mean Score

Surveys received by Press Ganey are processed and added to the client's electronic data storage area. Processing takes place immediately to provide clients with up-to-the-minute information about their service quality. Responses to survey questions are converted to a series of 100-point maximum scales so that clients can compare different aspects of their performance on a common yardstick. First, for each person who took the survey, responses to the survey questions are transformed from a 5-point scale to the 100-point scale. Items rated "Very Good" are awarded 100 points; those rated "Good," 75 points; items rated "Fair," 50 points, "Poor," 25 points, and any items rated "Very Poor" are awarded zero points. Next, each respondent's individual item scores within a survey section (see above) are averaged to become scores for each section. Finally, section scores are averaged to become that respondent's overall satisfaction score. The average of all respondents' overall satisfaction scores is called the client's overall mean score and is stored electronically and made available to the client.

Definition of Correlations

A correlation tells us how much a change in one variable (e.g., an item score) is associated with a concurrent systematic change in another variable (e.g., overall satisfaction). A correlation represents the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables numerically, expressed using a correlation coefficient (called r) which can range from -1.0 to $+1.0$. The greater the distance from 0, the stronger the relationship is between the two correlated items. A positive correlation coefficient indicates that as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other variable also increases. A negative correlation coefficient indicates that as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other variable decreases. When two variables are correlated it means that they are related to each other, but it does not necessarily mean that one causes the other.

Priority Index Calculation

The Priority Index is an ordered list of survey items that shows the areas needing the most improvement. Survey items on the Priority Index are arranged from the "first item to work on" to the "last item to work on." The Priority Index reflects service issues that clients are performing relatively poorly on that are important to their patients. It is calculated by looking at two aspects of each survey item's data: (1) its average score, and (2) how well it mirrors the respondent's overall satisfaction score, as determined above. Survey items that (1) have low average scores, indicating that the facility's quality for that aspect of its care is lacking relative to other care aspects, and (2) faithfully mirror the respondent's overall satisfaction score, will have high Priority Index scores.