

National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019

Cork University Hospital

2019 survey results

Respondents



803

Number of respondents



62.8

Average age



49%

Participation rate

Overall experience

2019

Very Good
56%

Good
29%

Fair to Poor
15%

2018

Very Good
55%

Good
30%

Fair to Poor
15%

Values in figures do not always add up to 100% due to rounding.

Stages of care

Admission to hospital

7.7
out of 10

Patient ratings of admission to the hospital were lower than the national average, and similar to the hospital's 2018 score.



8.2
out of 10

Care on the ward

Patient ratings of 'care on the ward' in the hospital were similar to the national average and also to last year's survey.

Examination, diagnosis and treatment

8.3
out of 10

Ratings of 'examination, diagnosis and treatment' were similar to the national average and to last year's survey.



7.1
out of 10

Discharge or transfer

Participant ratings of 'discharge or transfer' were similar to the national average and to last year's survey.

Structure and content of this report

About the National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019	4
What were the main findings for Cork University Hospital?	4
Hospital and participant profile	5
Areas of good experience and areas needing improvement	6
Survey results for the stages of care along the patient journey	7
Interpreting the results for the stages of care	7
Changes in patient experience over time	8
Admissions	9
Care on the ward	11
Examinations, diagnosis and treatment	13
Discharge or transfer	15
Other aspects of care	17
Overall experience	18
In their own words: analysis of patients' comments	19
Conclusion	21
What were patients' experiences of hospital care in Cork University Hospital in May 2019? ..	21
Appendix 1: Areas of good experience and areas needing improvement	22
Improvement map	22

About the National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019

The National Inpatient Experience Survey¹ is a nationwide survey that offers patients the opportunity to describe their experiences of public acute healthcare in Ireland. The survey is a partnership between the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health. It was conducted for the first time in 2017 and repeated in 2018 and 2019.

Nationally, 26,897 people were invited to participate in the third National Inpatient Experience Survey. In total, 12,343 people responded, resulting in a response rate of 46%. 803 patients from Cork University Hospital took part.

The aim of the survey is to find out about patients' experiences in public acute hospitals and to use their feedback to identify areas of good experience, and areas needing improvement. The HSE responded to the 2017 and 2018 survey results by producing detailed quality improvement plans at national, hospital group and hospital levels. The implementation of these plans is coordinated by an oversight group, and a wide range of initiatives have already been introduced across Ireland's public acute hospitals. Some examples of these initiatives can be seen at <https://yourexperience.ie/inpatient/hospital-initiatives/>.

What were the main findings for Cork University Hospital?

The majority of participants from Cork University Hospital reported positive experiences in hospital. 85% of participants said they had 'good' or 'very good' overall experiences, compared with 84% nationally. The hospital scored below the national average for the 'admissions' stage of care, and about the same as the national average for all other stages.²

Three areas of good experience were identified. These were areas that were related to participants' overall experiences and where participants gave significantly above-average ratings. For example, many patients said that they received clear answers from doctors. Furthermore, most patients also said that the toilets or bathrooms

¹ The survey was previously entitled the 'National Patient Experience Survey'. The name was updated in 2019 to more accurately reflect the target population.

² When there is no statistically significant difference between the hospital's score and the national average, it is described as 'about the same'.

they used were very clean. In addition, the majority of patients said their home or family situation was taken into account when planning their discharge from hospital.

There were also three areas needing improvement. While the majority of patients felt that they were given enough privacy while in the emergency department, the hospital still scored below the national average for this question. Cork University Hospital also scored below the national average for the questions on how patients rated the food, and whether they were offered a choice of food.

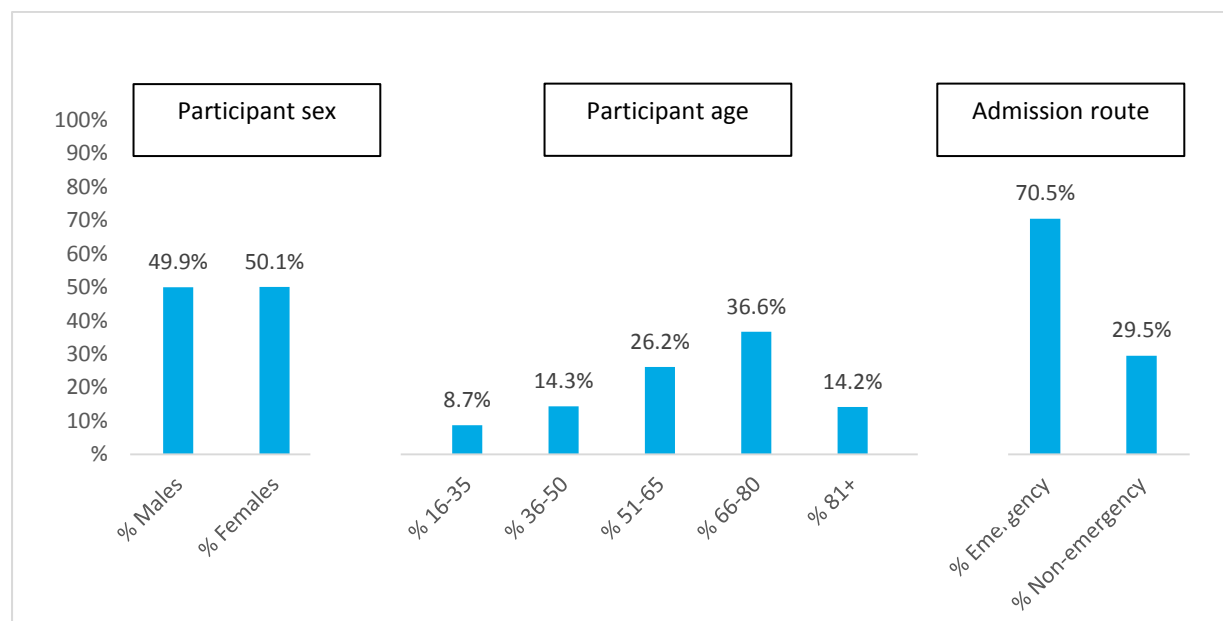
There were no significant differences in ratings of care compared with the 2018 survey. The findings of the 2019 survey will help Cork University Hospital to improve patients' experiences of care in hospital.

Hospital and participant profile

Cork University Hospital is located in Cork. There were 628 inpatient beds available in the hospital during the survey period of May 2019.

1,650 people discharged from Cork University Hospital during the month of May 2019 were invited to participate in the survey. 803 people completed the survey, achieving a response rate of 49%. 49.9% of participants were male and 50.1% were female. 566 respondents (70.5%) said that their stay in hospital was an emergency. Figure 1 below provides information on the respondents who took part in the survey from Cork University Hospital.

Figure 1 Participants from Cork University Hospital by sex, age group and admission route



Areas of good experience and areas needing improvement

This section lists the areas where most patients had positive experiences, and those areas where there is the most room for improvement. The list includes the relevant stage of care and question number for each area. Appendix 1 explains how these areas were identified.

The areas of good experience in Cork University Hospital are:

Other aspects of care

Cleanliness of toilets and bathrooms | Q11

706 (93%) of the 759 people who answered this question said that the toilets or bathrooms they used were very clean or fairly clean.

Care on the ward

Clear answers from a doctor | Q20

Of the 732 people who answered this question, 541 (74%) said that they always received answers they could understand from a doctor.

Discharge or transfer

Consideration of home/family situation | Q47

Of the 522 people who answered this question, 338 (65%) said that staff completely took their home or family situation into account when planning their discharge.

The areas needing improvement in Cork University Hospital are:

Admission

Privacy while being examined or treated in the emergency department | Q5

Of the 503 people who answered this question, 306 (61%) said that they definitely received enough privacy while being examined or treated in the emergency department. The hospital scored below the national average on this question.

Care on the ward

Food rating | Q15

Of the 764 people who answered this question, 513 (67%) said that the food was good or very good. This was below the national average for this question.

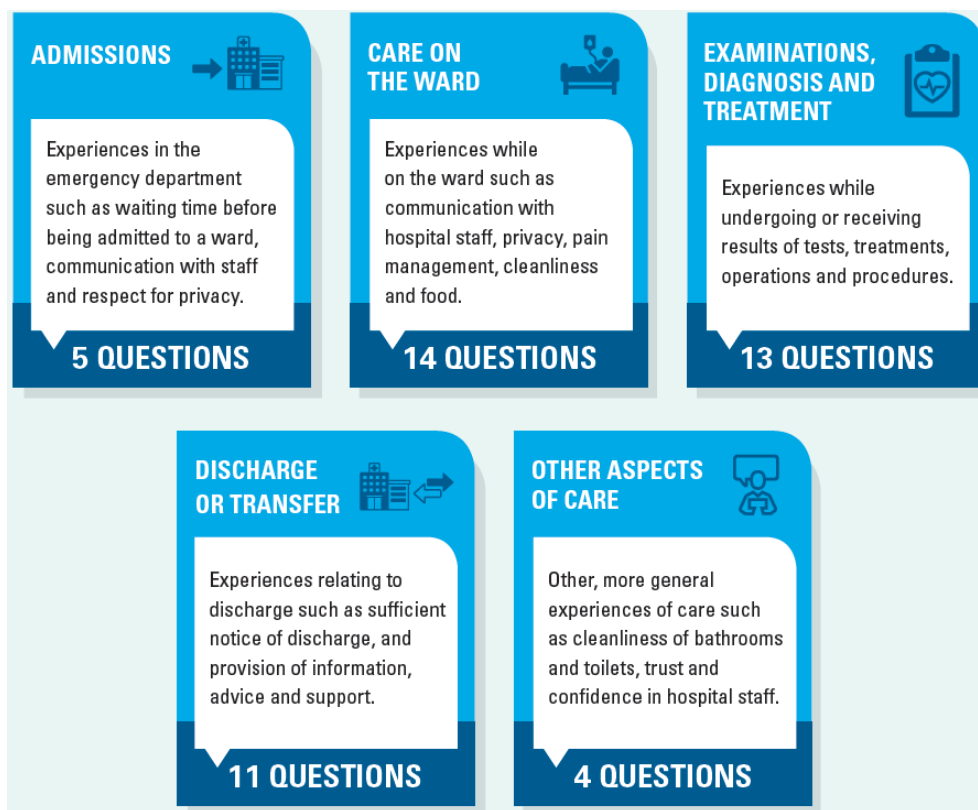
Care on the ward

Choice of food | Q16

506 people (67%) said that they were always offered a choice of food. The hospital scored below the national average on this question.

Survey results for the stages of care along the patient journey

The National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019 follows the patient journey through hospital from admission to discharge. The 2019 questionnaire is available to download from <http://www.yourexperience.ie/>. The survey questions were grouped into five stages along the patient journey:



Interpreting the results for the stages of care

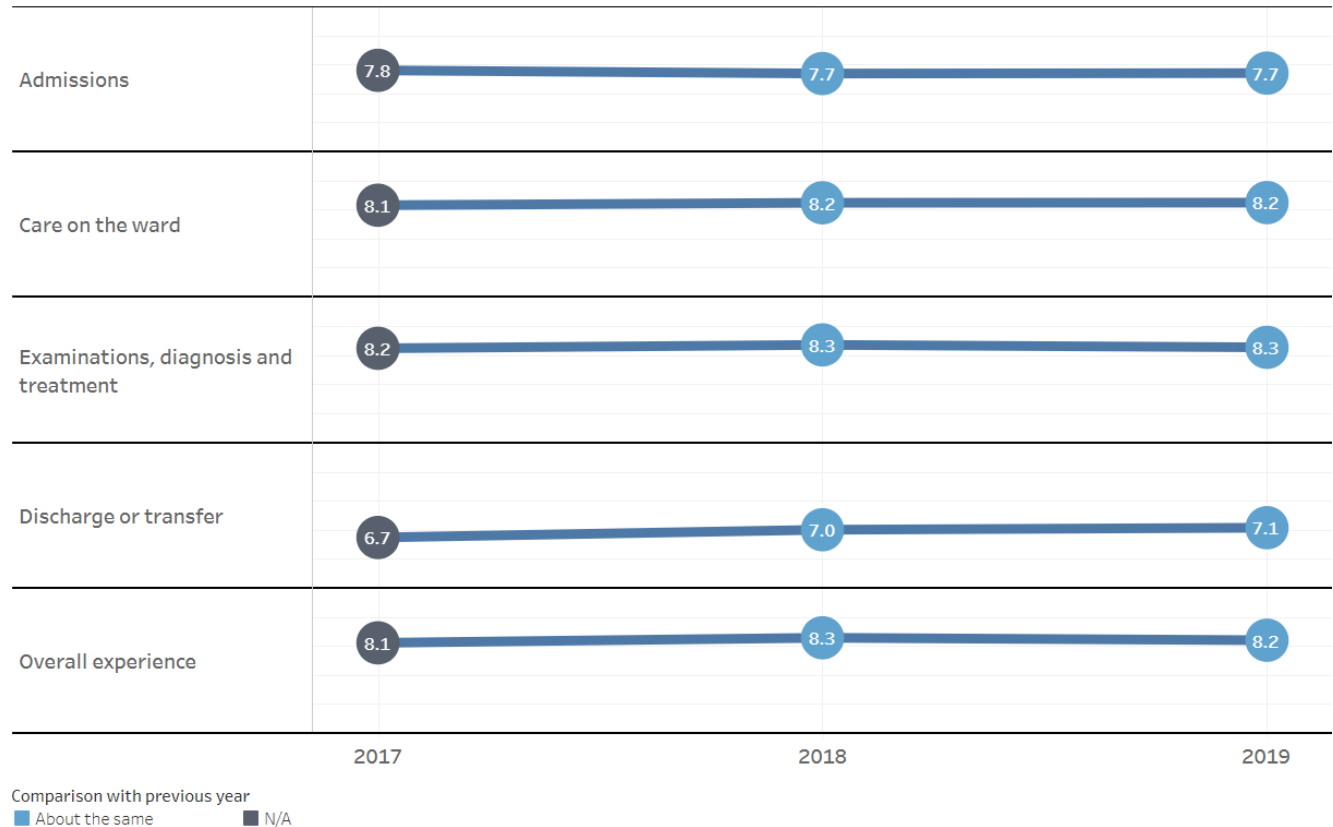
Scores out of 10 are given for each question belonging to a stage of care or to a stage as a whole. A score of 0 indicates a very negative experience and a score of 10 indicates a very positive experience. Sometimes questions are described as high- or low-ranking questions. These are questions with the highest or lowest score when compared to a set of questions.

Statistical tests were carried out to examine if there were significant differences in patient experience between 2018 and 2019, as well as between a hospital and the national average. Throughout this report, when the hospital scored significantly above the national average, this is described as 'higher'. When a hospital scored significantly below the national average, it is described as 'lower'. When there is no statistically significant difference between the hospital's score and the national average, it is described as 'about the same'. For further information on the analyses please consult Appendix 3 of the 2019 national report, available from <http://www.yourexperience.ie/>.

Changes in patient experience over time

There were no significant changes in patient experience since the 2018 survey. Figure 2 shows a comparison of scores for individual stages of care. It is important that any changes are interpreted with caution as scores will naturally vary from year to year for a variety of reasons. Several rounds of survey data will be required before meaningful trends and changes in patient experience can be accurately identified.

Figure 2 Annual comparison of stage of care scores³ for Cork University Hospital



³ Scores for the stages of care were constructed by calculating the average scores for all the questions belonging to that stage.



Admissions

Figure 3 compares the hospital's overall score for 'admissions' with the national average. Figure 4 shows the hospital's scores for questions on this stage of care.

Figure 3 Comparison of Cork University Hospital with the national average score for 'admissions' (out of a maximum of 10).

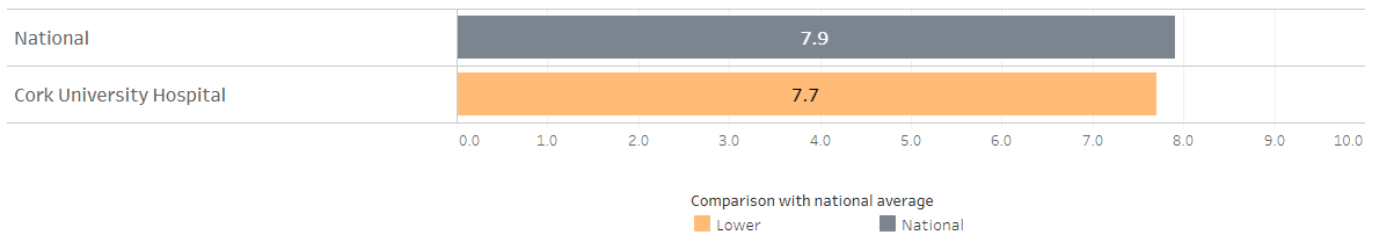
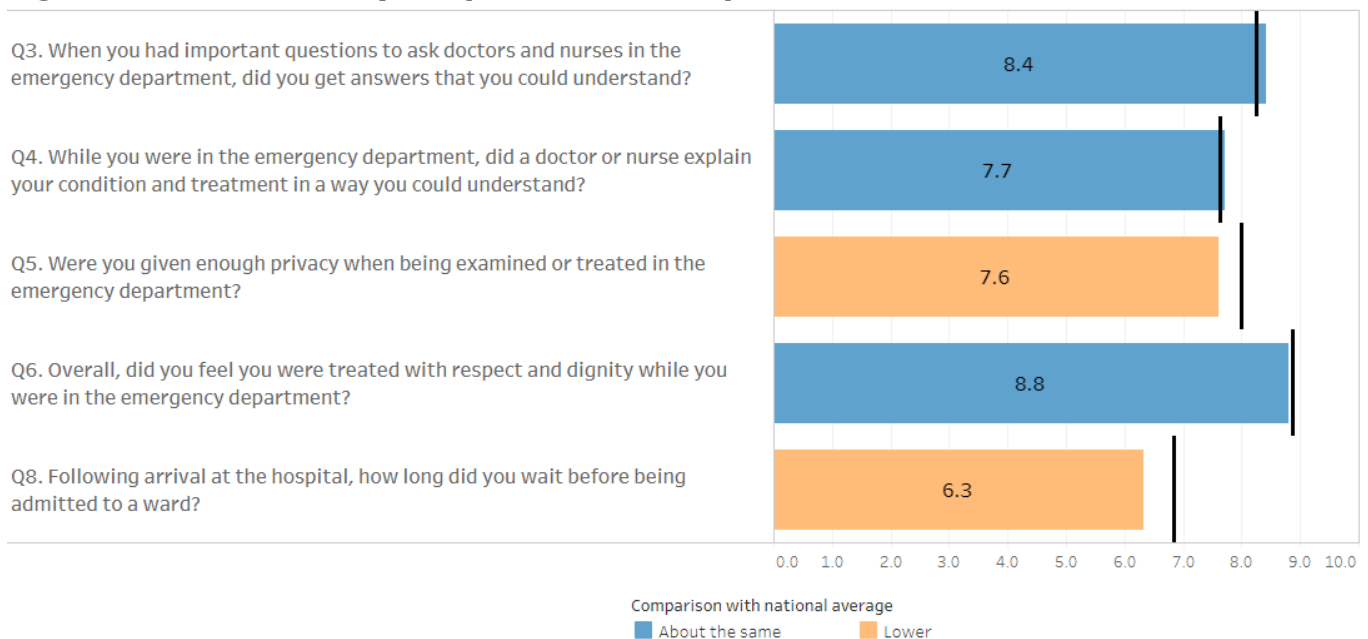


Figure 4 Cork University Hospital scores for questions on 'admissions'*



*The black line represents the national average

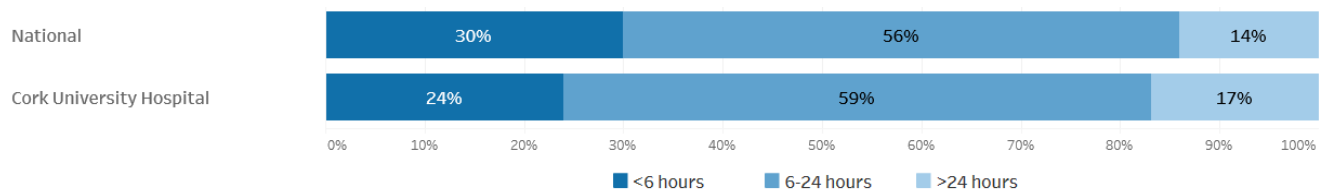
Emergency department waiting times⁴

The HSE sets targets for the performance of acute hospitals, including targets on waiting times in emergency departments, such as:

- 75% of people attending the emergency department are discharged or admitted to a ward within six hours of registration and none should wait for longer than nine hours.
- 95% of people attending the emergency department aged 75 years or older are discharged or admitted to a ward within six hours of registration and none should wait for longer than nine hours.

In Cork University Hospital, 116 respondents (24%) said they were admitted to a ward within six hours of arriving at the emergency department, while 287 respondents (59%) reported waiting between six and 24 hours. 82 respondents (17%) said that they waited 24 hours or more before being admitted to a ward in Cork University Hospital, with 20 of these saying they waited more than 48 hours. As outlined in Appendix 1, the relationship between waiting times and overall experience was relatively weak. This means that patients who had long waiting times did not always say they had a negative overall experience. Figure 5 outlines the emergency department waiting times, as reported by patients in Cork University Hospital, compared with the national average.

Figure 5 Emergency department waiting times, as reported by patients for Cork University Hospital and nationally



Admissions: what do these results mean?

Patient ratings of admission to Cork University Hospital were lower than the national average, and similar to the hospital's 2018 score. Most patients said they were treated with respect and dignity in the emergency department. However, most patients said they were not admitted to a ward within the six-hour target, and this was the lowest scoring question for this stage.

⁴ The HSE measures emergency department waiting times differently to the survey, namely from the time a patient registers at the emergency department until they leave it. It is likely that there are some differences between survey findings and the official HSE figures. The HSE 2019 targets can be viewed at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/kpis/acute-hospitals-metadata-2019.pdf>



Care on the ward

Figure 6 compares the hospital's overall score for 'care on the ward' with the national average. Figure 7 shows the hospital's scores for questions on this stage of care.

Figure 6 Comparison of Cork University Hospital with the national average score for 'care on the ward' (out of a maximum of 10).

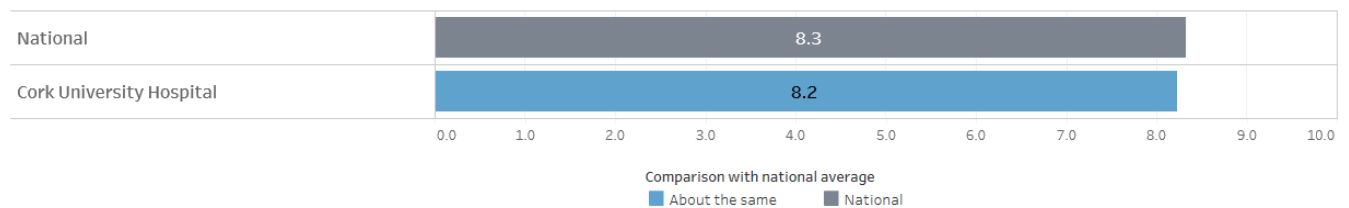
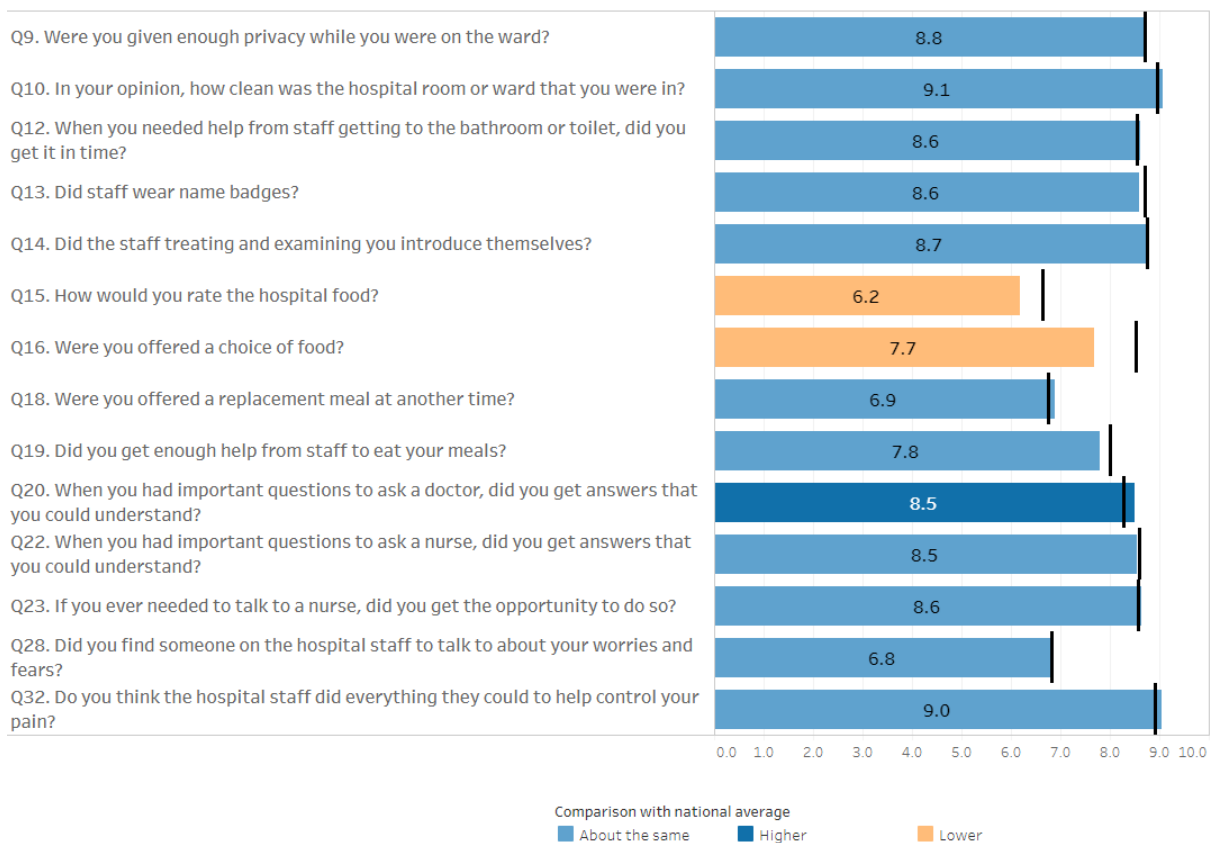


Figure 7 Cork University Hospital scores for questions on 'care on the ward'*



*The black line represents the national average

Care on the ward: what do these results mean?

Cork University Hospital received patient ratings of 'care on the ward' that were similar to the national average and also to last year's survey. Most patients gave a positive rating of the cleanliness of rooms and wards. The lowest scoring question for this stage related to patients' ratings of the food they received.

EXAMINATIONS, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Experiences while undergoing or receiving results of tests, treatments, operations and procedures.

13 QUESTIONS

Examinations, diagnosis and treatment

Figure 8 compares the hospital's overall score for 'examinations, diagnosis and treatment' with the national average. Figure 9 shows the hospital's scores for questions on this stage of care.

Figure 8 Comparison of Cork University Hospital with the national average score for 'examinations, diagnosis and treatment' (out of a maximum of 10).

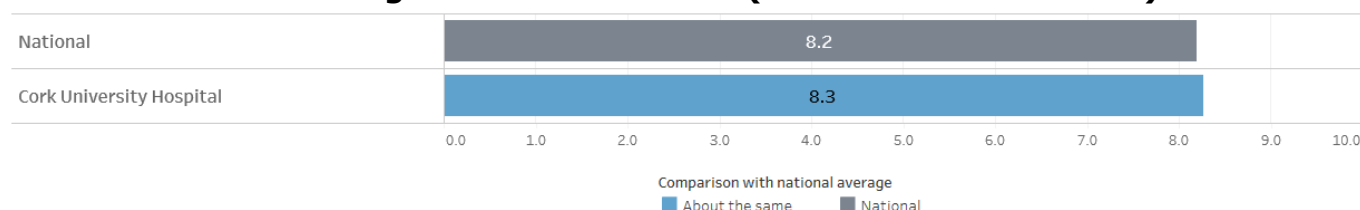
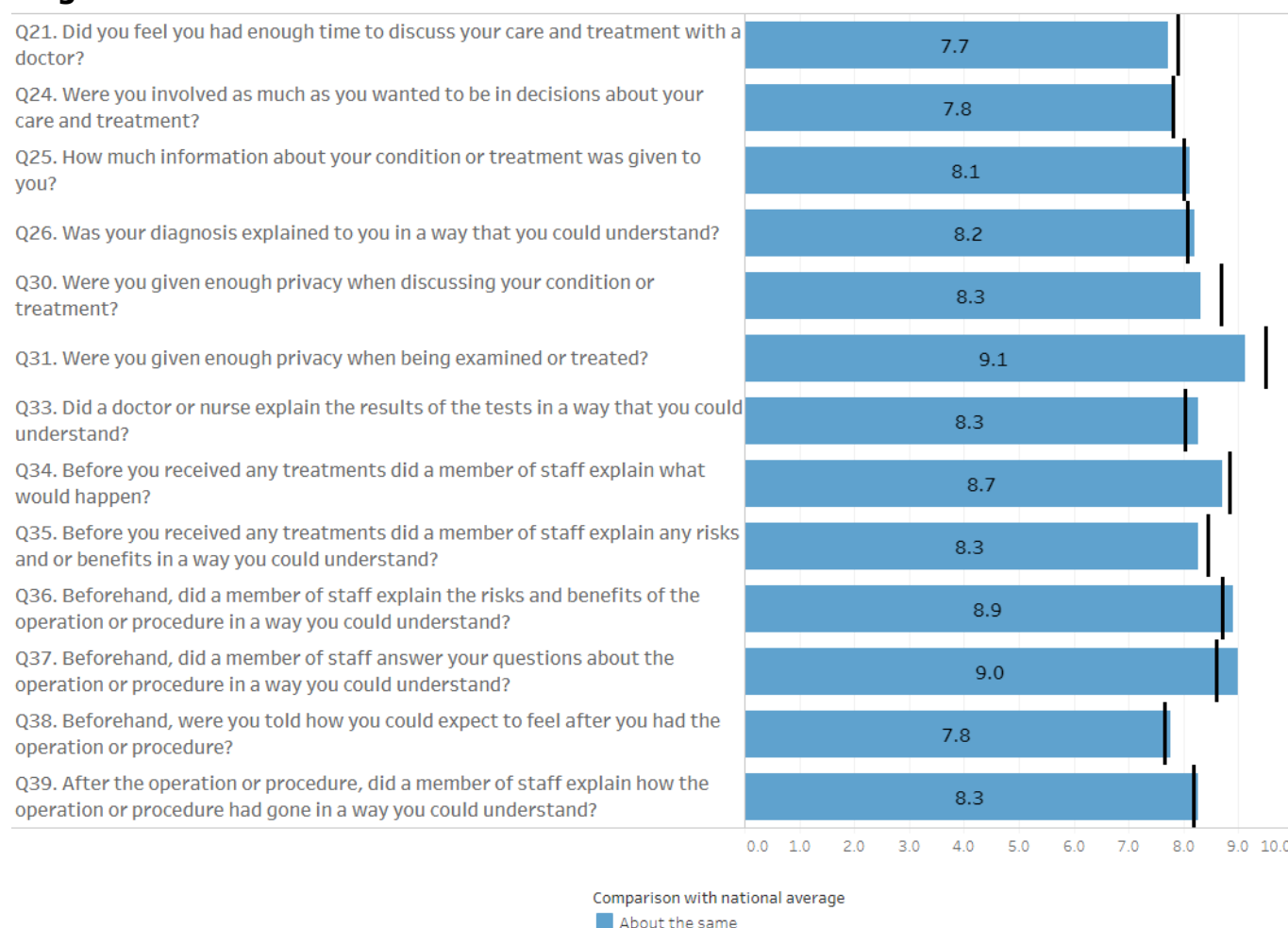


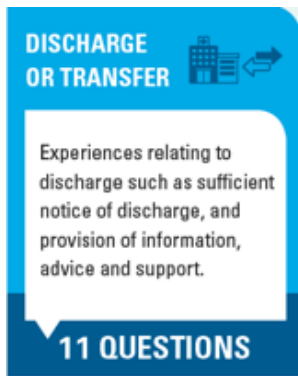
Figure 9 Cork University Hospital scores for questions on 'examinations, diagnosis and treatment'*



*The black line represents the national average

Examinations, diagnosis and treatment: what do these results mean?

Ratings of 'examination, diagnosis and treatment' were similar to the national average and similar to last year's survey. Most patients said that they were given enough privacy while being examined or treated. The lowest scoring question for this stage related to the time patients had to discuss their care and treatment with a doctor.



Discharge or transfer

Figure 10 compares the hospital's overall score for 'discharge or transfer' with the national average. Figure 11 shows the hospital's scores for questions on this stage of care.

Figure 10 Comparison of Cork University Hospital with the national average score for 'discharge or transfer' (out of a maximum of 10).

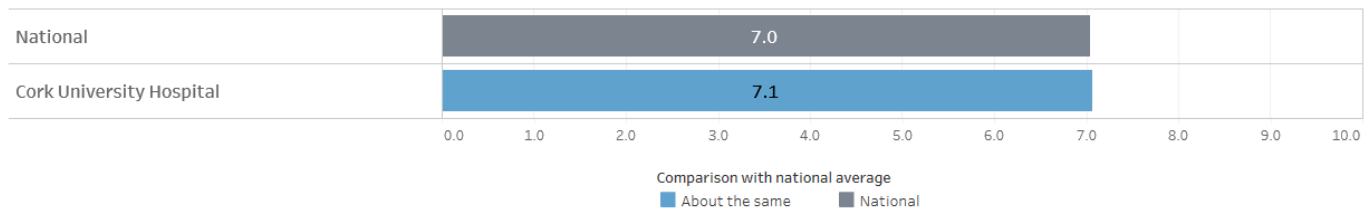
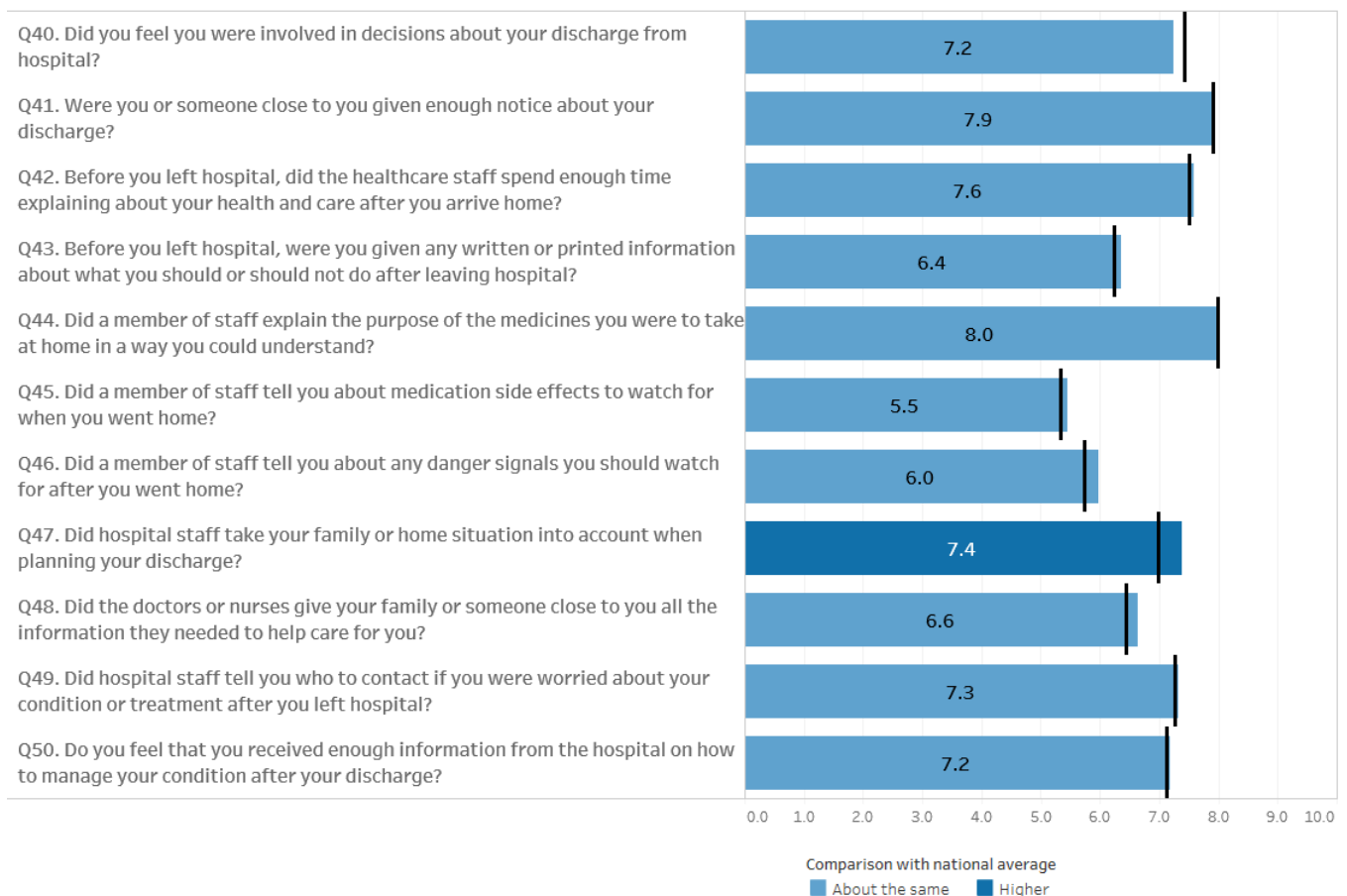


Figure 11 Cork University Hospital scores for questions on 'discharge or transfer'*



*The black line represents the national average

Discharge or transfer: what do these results mean?

Participant ratings for this stage of care were similar to the national average and to last year's survey. Most patients said that staff explained the purpose of medications they were to take at home. The lowest scoring questions for this stage related to the explanations patients received on the potential side effects of medication, and whether written or printed information on their care was provided to them.

**OTHER ASPECTS
OF CARE**

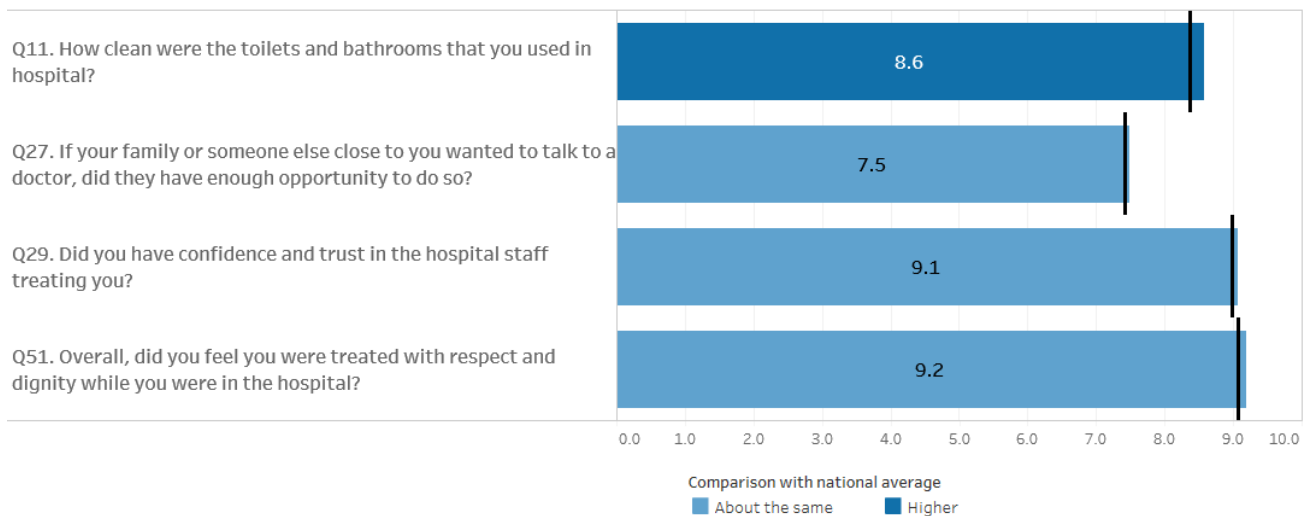
Other, more general
experiences of care such
as cleanliness of bathrooms
and toilets, trust and
confidence in hospital staff.

4 QUESTIONS

Other aspects of care

Figure 12 shows the hospital's scores for questions on this stage of care.

Figure 12 Cork University Hospital scores for 'other aspects of care'*



*The black line represents the national average

Other aspects of care: what do these results mean?

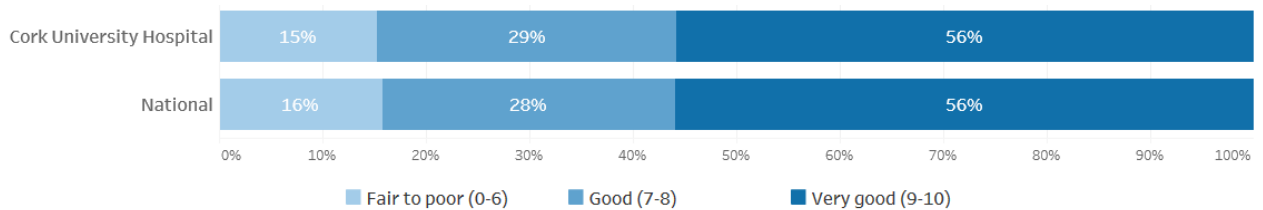
Most participants said they were treated with respect and dignity while they were in the hospital. On the other hand, a number of patients said that their families were not given sufficient opportunity to talk to a doctor.

Overall experience

Respondents were asked to rate their overall hospital experience on a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 being the most positive experience, and 0 the most negative experience. 56% of participants from Cork University Hospital rated their care as very good, the same as the national figure of 56%.

Figure 13 compares the average overall rating of hospital experience for Cork University Hospital with the national average.

Figure 13 Overall rating of hospital experience for Cork University Hospital and nationally



In their own words: analysis of patients' comments

The last three questions (questions 59-61) of the survey asked patients to provide additional information, in their own words, on their experiences in hospital. These free-text questions allowed people to give a more in-depth description of specific aspects of their care. It also allowed them to talk about various things (good or bad) that could not be captured by the structured questions. In total, 1,214 comments were received from patients of Cork University Hospital in response to the free-text questions in the 2019 survey.

Figure 14 shows the breakdown of comments by theme for each of the three open-ended questions. Q59 asked participants what was particularly good about their hospital care, Q60 asked participants what could be improved, and Q61 asked participants for any other comments or suggestions.

In relation to good aspects of care, most of the comments related to the 'hospital staff', 'general and other comments' and 'physical environment' themes. Most patient suggestions for improvement related to the 'hospital staff'; 'physical environment', and 'food and drink' themes. Responses to Q61 covered various themes. A selection of relevant comments from these themes is provided in Figure 15.

Figure 14 Participant comments by theme

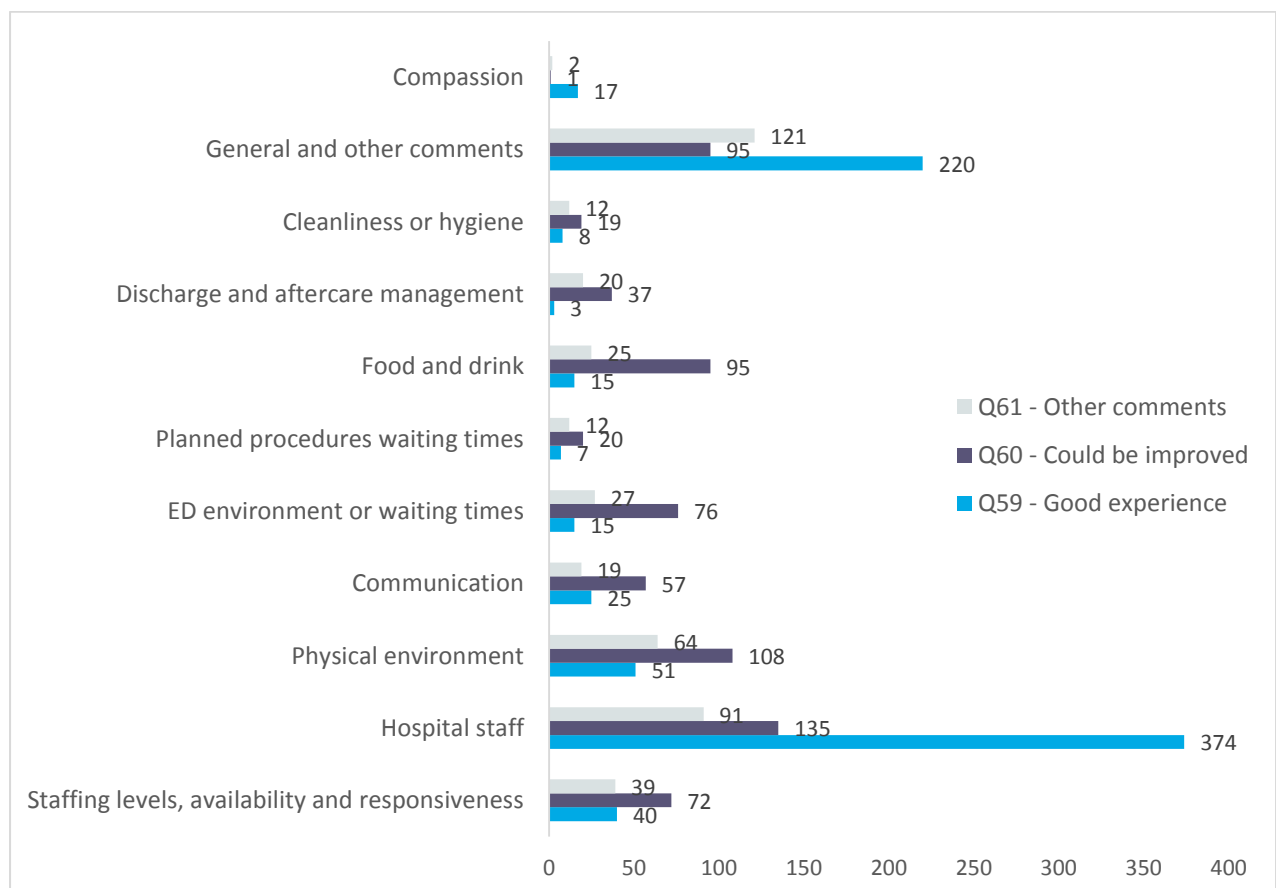


Figure 15 Example comments

Positive comments

"Excellent medical care from doctors and nurses. All procedures were explained, questions answered and very respectfully treated at all times."	"A&E staff are excellent but just run off their feet. All staff to the best of their ability try to help and advice but just too much time pressure on them."
"I would not change a thing everyone was so kind and excellent."	"Everything was good. Medical care was excellent. Slow to react to pain on one occasion."
"Staff listened to me and got to the bottom of my problem."	"The cleanliness of the ward and bathrooms were fantastic with floors mopped every day."

Suggestions for improvement

"I was to be discharged early in the day but I was waiting around for the doctor to call. Eventually I was discharged about 3 without seeing the doctor. The nurse gave me the necessary information before I was discharged. I should have been discharged early in the morning to free up a bed for those in A&E earlier."
"More privacy definitely. 5 other people could repeat what doc said to me, I felt I couldn't totally express my feelings."
"The noise level after eight o' clock could be looked at (between the hours of 8pm-7am). Nurses and other staff could be a little more considerate of patients trying to sleep or rest."

Conclusion

What were patients' experiences of hospital care in Cork University Hospital in May 2019?

The majority of patients said that they had positive overall experiences in Cork University Hospital. 85% of patients said they had a 'good' or 'very good' experience, compared with 84% nationally.

Cork University Hospital received a below-average score for the 'admissions' stage of care, and scores that were similar to the average for all other stages of care. Participant ratings of care were generally similar to those received in 2018.

Three areas of good experience were identified. These were areas that were related to participants' overall experiences and where participants gave significantly above-average ratings. For example, patients said that doctors gave clear answers to their questions, and that the bathrooms and toilets were clean. In addition, most patients said their home or family situation was taken into account when planning their discharge.

There were also three areas needing improvement. While the majority of patients felt that they were given enough privacy in the emergency department, the hospital scored below the national average for this question. Similarly, most patients rated the hospital food positively, but the hospital still scored below the national average in this area. In addition, a lower than average number of patients said they were always offered a choice of food.

The findings of the 2019 survey will be used to help Cork University Hospital improve the experiences of patients in hospital.

Appendix 1: Areas of good experience and areas needing improvement

Improvement map

It is important for hospitals to know if they scored above or below the national average for each question, and this is shown in the improvement map in Figure 16. The improvement map also shows which questions are related to patients' overall experience in hospital. Some questions had a stronger relationship with overall experience than others.

For example, Question 51 which asked patients if they were treated with respect and dignity had a strong relationship with overall experience. This means that patients who said they were treated with respect and dignity were very likely to give a positive rating of their overall experience. Patients who felt they were not treated with respect and dignity tended to give more negative ratings of their overall experience.

Other questions had a weaker relationship with overall experience – this means that patients' experiences in these areas had little bearing on how they rated their overall experience. An example is Question 8 which asked patients how long they had to wait before being admitted to a ward. The relationship between waiting time and patients' ratings of their overall experience was weak. This means that even if patients had a short waiting time until admission to a ward, they may have given negative ratings of their overall experience, or if they had a long waiting time until admission, patients may still have given positive ratings of their overall experience.

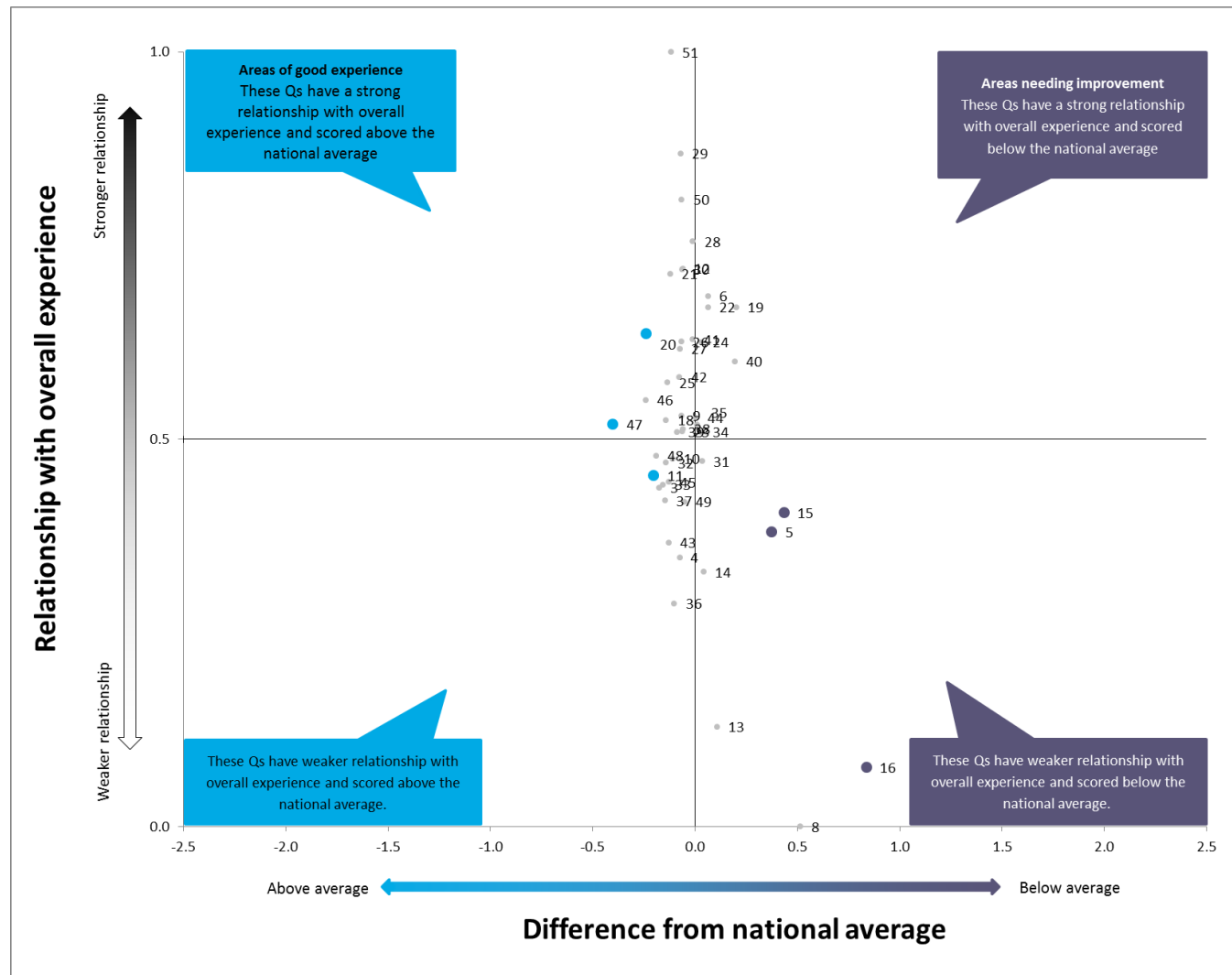
It is useful for hospitals to know which questions strongly relate to their patients' overall experience as these are the areas on which they should focus their improvement efforts.

In Figure 16, each dot shows a specific survey question for Cork University Hospital. Questions at the top of the graph are strongly related to overall experience, while those at the bottom have a weaker relationship. Questions to the right of the graph scored below the national average, while those on the left scored above it.

Questions that scored significantly above average and had a stronger relationship with overall experience are areas of good experience. Questions that scored significantly below average and had a stronger relationship with overall experience are areas needing improvement.

The improvement map for each hospital is unique and gives specific information on where a hospital is doing well, and areas where improvements are needed. More information on the science behind the improvement map is available below. An interactive version of the improvement map is also available at <http://www.yourexperience.ie/>, along with instructions on how to interpret it.

Figure 16. Improvement Map for Cork University Hospital



How the improvement map is constructed

The improvement map is constructed by charting the normalised correlation between each question and overall experience on the vertical axis, against the difference between the hospital average and national average for each question on the horizontal axis.

What is correlation?

Correlation is a measure of the relationship between two variables. For example, in general there is a strong correlation between patients saying they were treated with respect and dignity, and patients giving a positive rating of their overall experience in hospital. It can thus be said that there is a strong correlation between respect and dignity, and overall experience. A 'correlation coefficient' is a number between 0 and 1 that represents the strength of a relationship, with 1 being the strongest possible relationship and 0 indicating that there is no relationship. Correlation does not tell us if a change in one variable is caused by a change in the other.

How do we calculate the correlation coefficient?

The first step in calculating the correlation coefficient between two variables is to calculate their 'covariance'. Covariance is a simple measure of the relationship between two variables and is calculated using the formula below:

$$\text{COV}_{xy} = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{n - 1}$$

While covariance does measure the relationship between variables, it does so in an unstandardised way, depending on the scale of measurement used. This makes comparing covariances measured on different scales problematic. In order to get around this issue, 'standardisation' must be carried out. In order to do this, the covariance for both variables must be divided by the product of the standard deviations for each variable. The formula below shows how standardisation is carried out, resulting in r , known as the 'Pearson correlation coefficient'.

$$r = \frac{\text{COV}_{xy}}{s_x s_y} = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{(N - 1) s_x s_y}$$

The final step in the analysis is to normalise the correlation coefficients between 0 and 1 using the below formula:

$$r = \frac{r - r_{\min}}{r_{\max} - r_{\min}}$$

In Figure 16, we plot the correlation coefficients between each question and overall experience on the vertical axis. Each question's difference from the national average is plotted on the horizontal axis.

How do we calculate difference from the national average?

Statistical tests were carried out to examine if there were significant differences between a hospital's score for each question and the national average for that question. A z-test was used to compare question scores at the 99% confidence level. A z-test is a statistical test used to examine whether two population mean scores are different. A statistically significant difference means it is very unlikely that results were obtained by chance alone if there was no real difference. Therefore, when a score is significantly 'higher than' or 'lower than' the national average, this is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance.