

National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019

Galway University Hospitals

2019 survey results

Respondents



922

Number of respondents



62.3

Average age



50%

Participation rate

Overall experience

2019

Very Good
58%

Good
27%

Fair to Poor
15%

2018

Very Good
58%

Good
27%

Fair to Poor
15%

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

Stages of care

7.7
out of 10

Admission to hospital

Patient ratings of admission to the hospital were similar to the national average and to the hospitals' 2018 score.



8.3
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.



8.3
out of 10

Examination, diagnosis and treatment

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



7.3
out of 10

Discharge or transfer

Participant ratings of 'discharge or transfer' were above both the national average and last year's score.



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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%. 922 patients from Galway University Hospitals 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 Galway University Hospitals?

The majority of participants from Galway University Hospitals reported positive experiences in hospital. 85% of participants said they had 'good' or 'very good' overall experiences, compared with 84% nationally. The hospitals scored above the national average for the 'discharge or transfer' stage of care, and about the same as the national average for the 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 were given enough time to discuss their care and treatment with a doctor, and said that they received answers they could understand when they had questions. The majority of

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'.

participants said that there were sufficient opportunities for their families to talk to a doctor.

Two areas needing improvement were also identified. While the majority of patients said they had enough privacy in the emergency department, the hospitals scored below the national average for this question. In addition, patient ratings of the hospital food were below the national average.

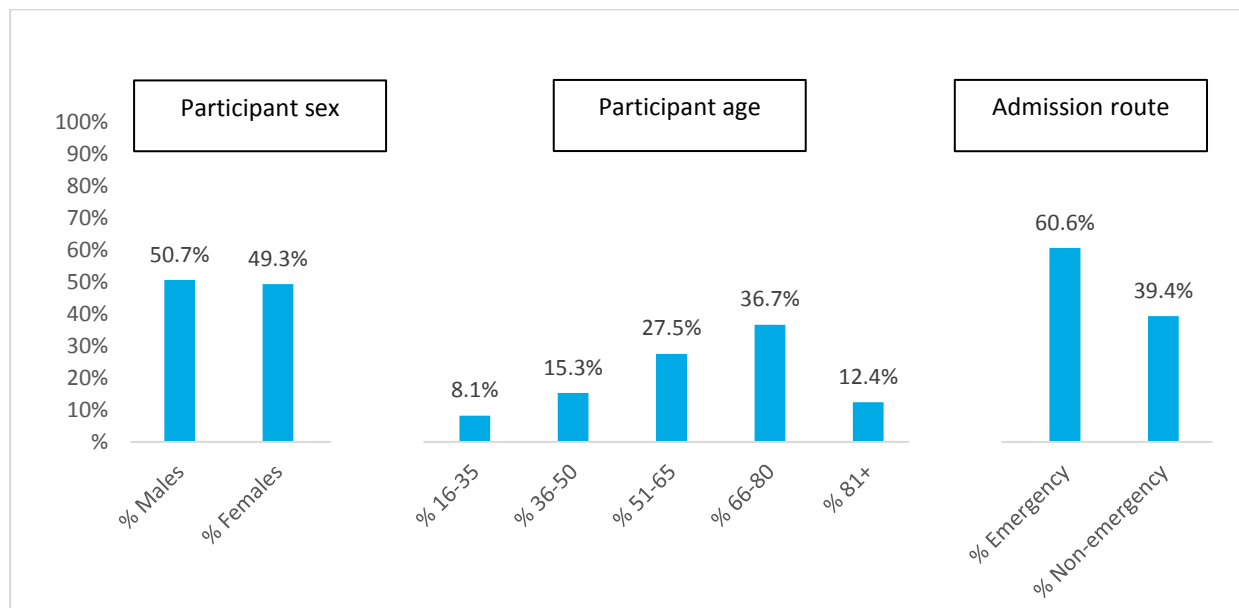
Patient ratings of 'discharge or transfer' were significantly higher than in the 2018 survey. There were no other significant changes in patient ratings since 2018. The findings of the 2019 survey will help Galway University Hospitals to improve patients' experiences of care in the hospitals.

Hospital and participant profile

Galway University Hospitals consists of University Hospital Galway and Merlin Park University Hospital, and is located in Galway. There were 600 inpatient beds available in the hospitals during the survey period of May 2019.

1,864 people discharged from Galway University Hospitals during the month of May 2019 were invited to participate in the survey. 922 people completed the survey, achieving a response rate of 50%. 50.7% of participants were male and 49.3% were female. 559 respondents (60.6%) said that their stay in hospital was due to an emergency. Figure 1 below provides information on the respondents who took part in the survey from Galway University Hospitals.

Figure 1 Participants from Galway University Hospitals 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 Galway University Hospitals are:

Care on the ward

Clear answers from a doctor | Q20

643 (76%) of the 847 people who answered this question said that doctors always answered their questions in a way that they could understand.

Examination, diagnosis and treatment

Time to discuss care and treatment with a doctor | Q21

Of the 892 people who answered this question, 588 (66%) said that they definitely had enough time to discuss their care and treatment with a doctor.

Other aspects of care

Opportunity for family members to talk to a doctor | Q27

Of the 650 people who answered this question, 413 (64%) said that there were sufficient opportunities for their families to talk to a doctor.

The areas needing improvement in Galway University Hospitals are:

Admission

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

Of the 490 people who answered this question, 304 (62%) said that they definitely had enough privacy while being examined or treated in the emergency department. The hospital scored below the national average on this question.

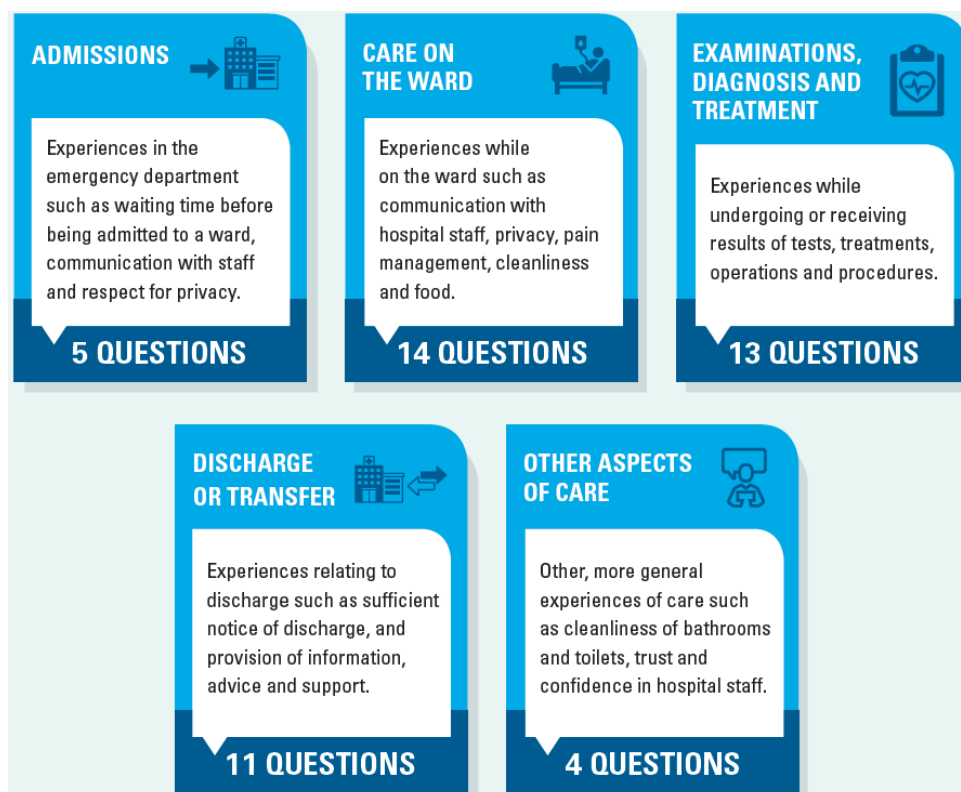
Care on the ward

Food rating | Q15

Of the 868 people who answered this question, 544 (63%) said that the hospital food was good or very good. This was below the national average for 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 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

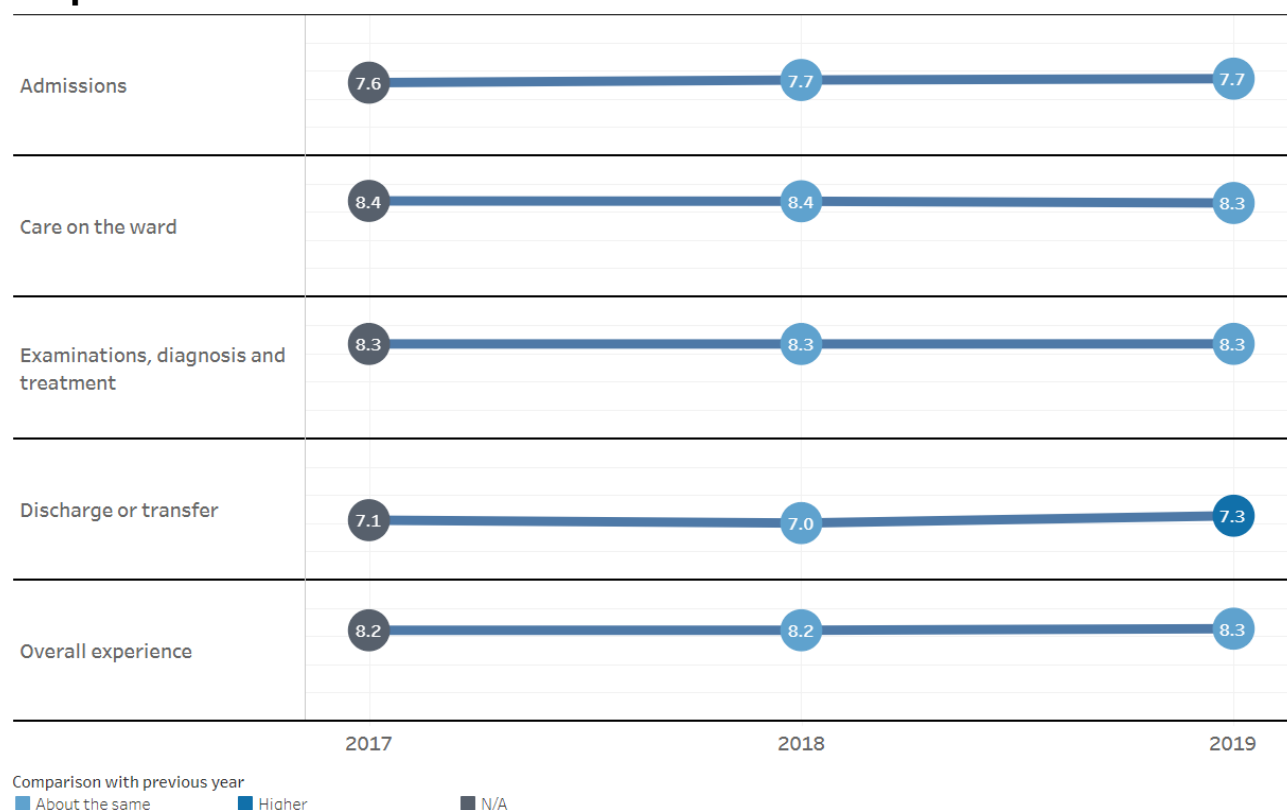
national average. Throughout this report, when the hospital scored significantly above the national average, this is described as 'higher'. When a hospital scored significantly below the national average, it is described as 'lower'. When there is no statistically significant difference between the hospital's 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 www.yourexperience.ie.

Changes in patient experience over time

Patient ratings of 'discharge or transfer' were significantly higher than in the 2018 survey. There were no other substantial changes in patient ratings since 2018. Figure 2 shows a comparison of scores for the individual stages of care.

It is important that these 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 Galway University Hospitals



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

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

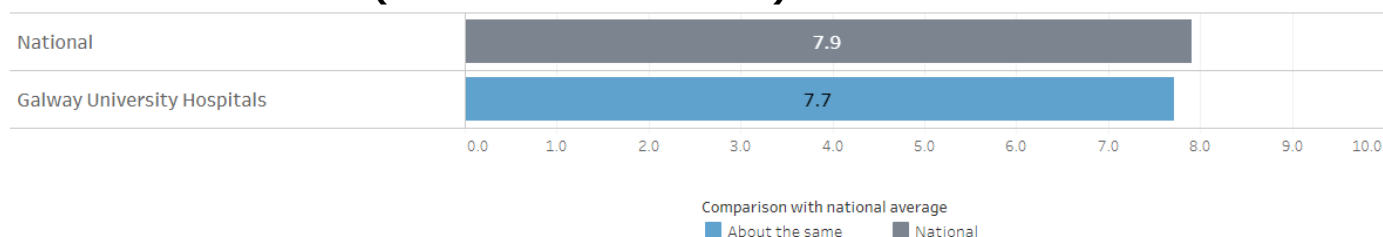
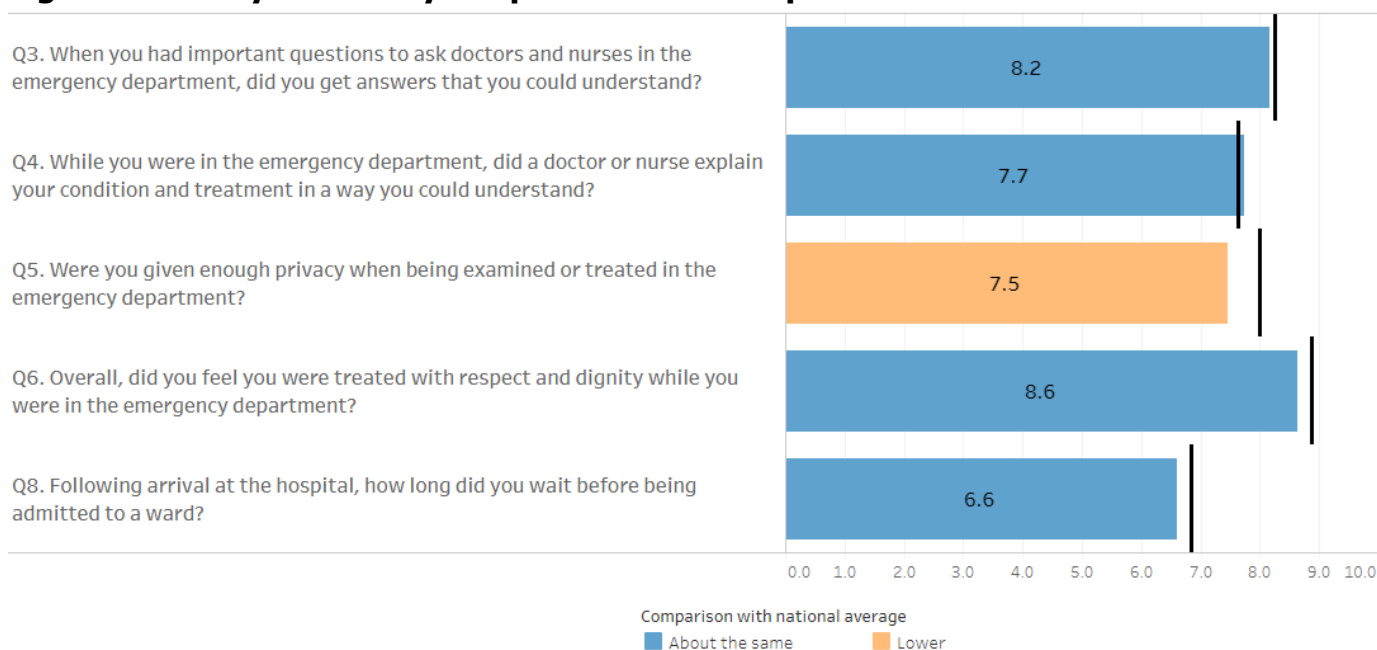


Figure 4 Galway University Hospitals scores for questions on 'admissions'*



*The black line represents the national average

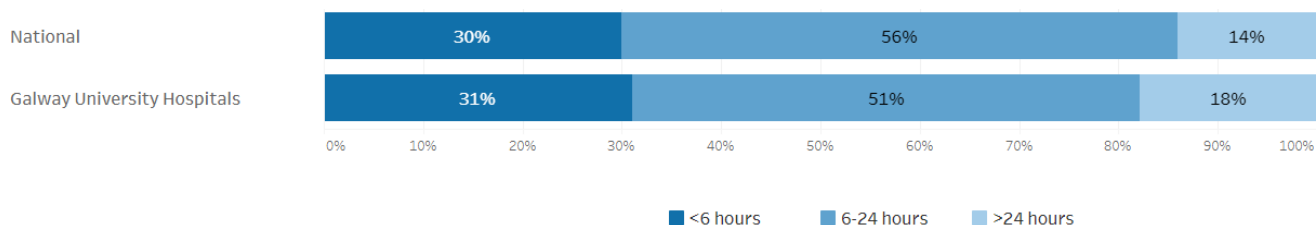
Emergency department waiting times⁴

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 Galway University Hospitals, 148 respondents (31%) said they were admitted to a ward within six hours of arriving at the emergency department, while 244 respondents (51%) reported waiting between six and 24 hours. 85 respondents (18%) said that they waited 24 hours or more before being admitted to a ward in Galway University Hospitals, with 32 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 Galway University Hospitals, compared with the national average.

Figure 5 Emergency department waiting times, as reported by patients for Galway University Hospitals and nationally



Admissions: what do these results mean?

Patient ratings of admission to Galway University Hospitals were similar to the national average and to the hospitals' 2018 score. Most patients said they were treated with respect and dignity in the emergency department. The lowest scoring question for this stage related to waiting times before admission to a ward.

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

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

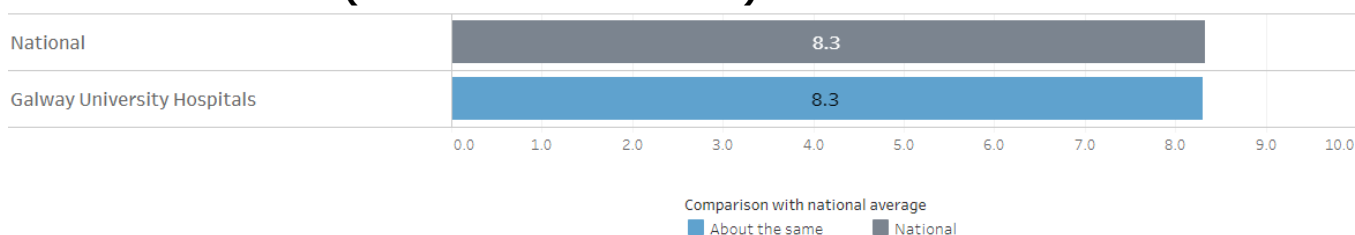
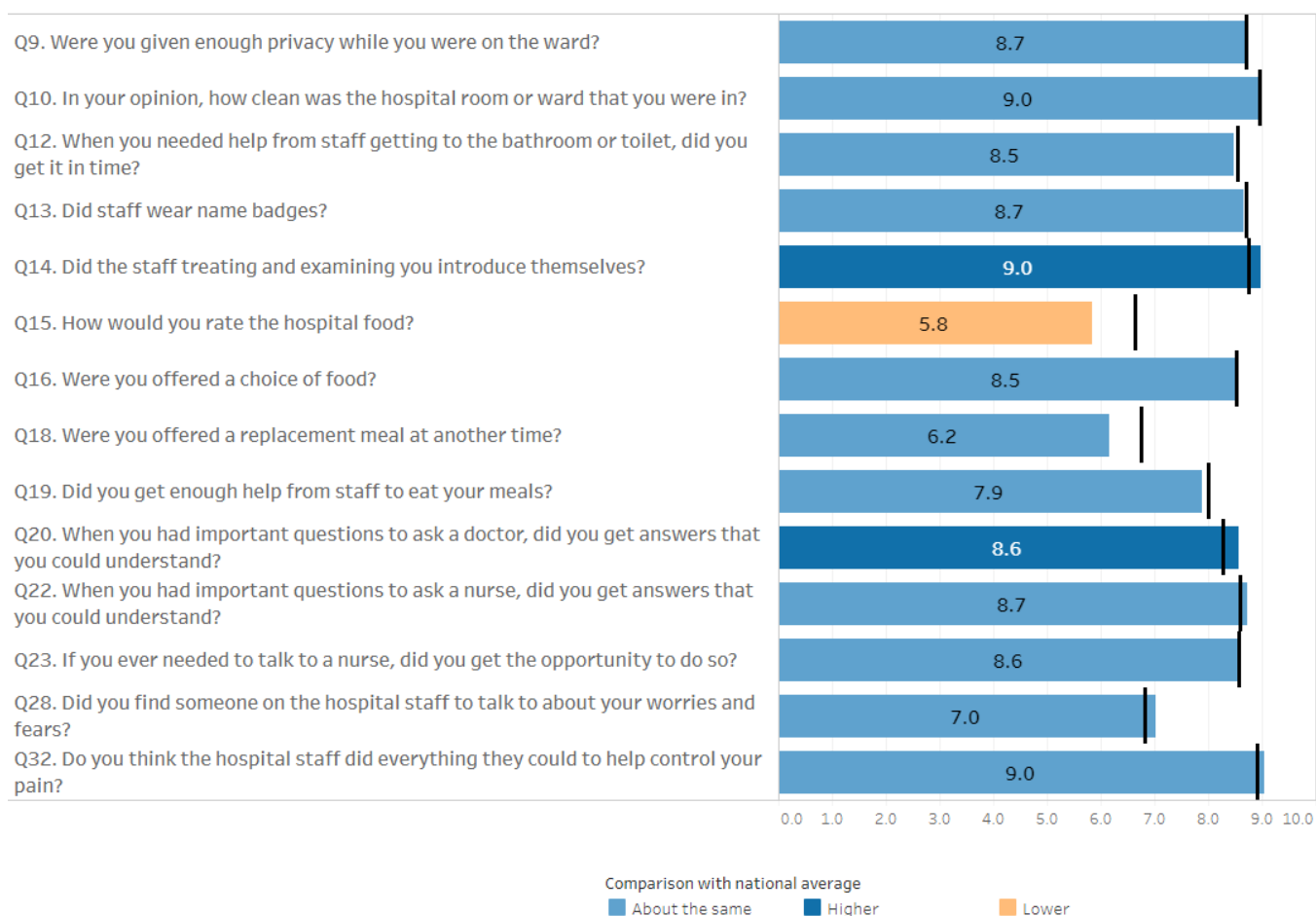


Figure 7 Galway University Hospitals scores for questions on 'care on the ward'*



*The black line represents the national average

Care on the ward: what do these results mean?

Patient ratings of care on the ward in Galway University Hospitals were similar to the national average, and also to last year's survey. Most patients gave a positive rating of the cleanliness of wards, and said that staff introduced themselves. In addition, the majority of patients were happy with how pain was managed in the hospitals. The lowest scoring question for this stage related to patient ratings of the food, with the hospitals scoring below the national average for this question.



Examinations, diagnosis and treatment

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

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

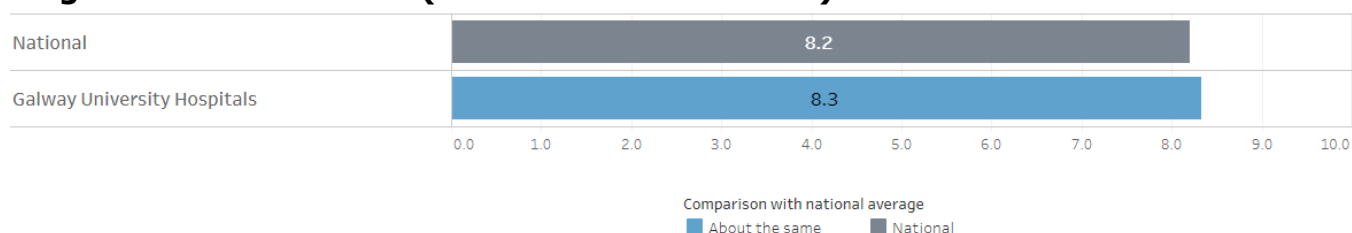
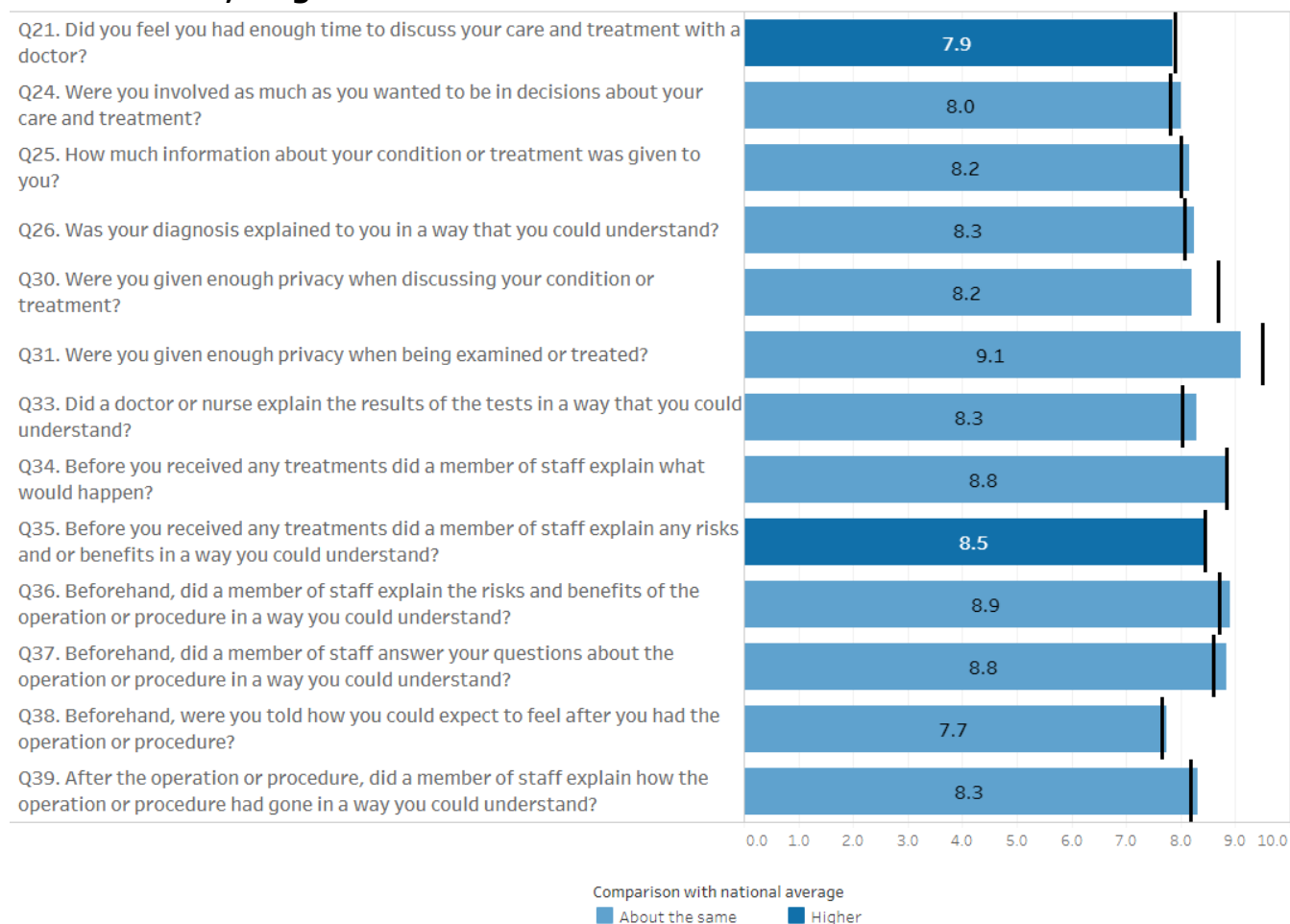


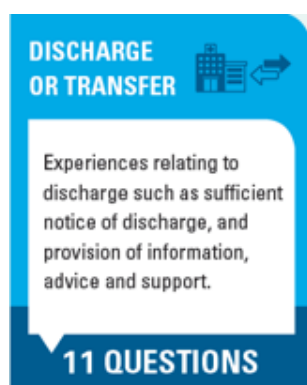
Figure 9 Galway University Hospitals scores for questions on 'examinations, diagnosis and treatment'*



*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 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 whether patients were told how they could expect to feel after an operation or procedure.



Discharge or transfer

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

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

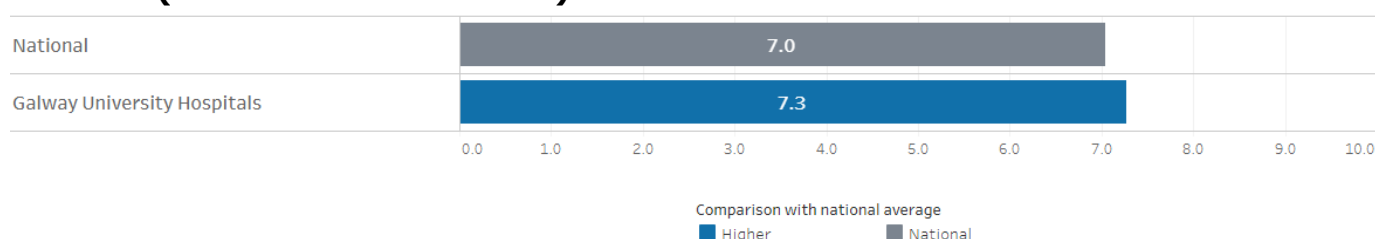
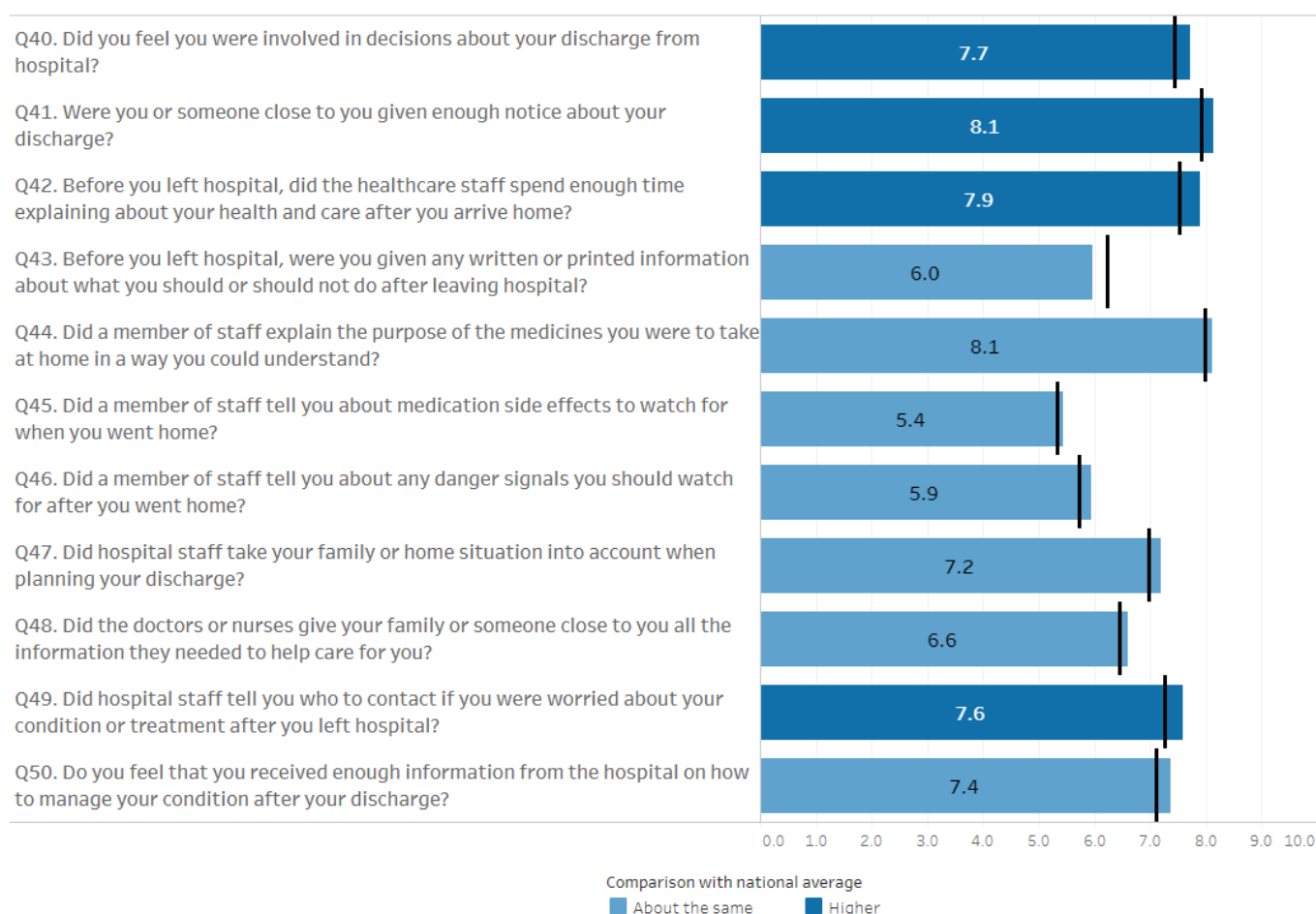


Figure 11 Galway University Hospitals scores for questions on 'discharge or transfer'



*The black line represents the national average

Discharge or transfer: what do these results mean?

Participant ratings for this stage of care were above both the national average and last year's score. Most patients said that staff explained the purpose of the medications they were to take at home. In addition, the majority of participants said they, or someone close to them, were given enough notice of their discharge from hospital. The lowest scoring question for this stage related to whether the potential side effects of medication were fully explained to patients.

**OTHER ASPECTS
OF CARE**

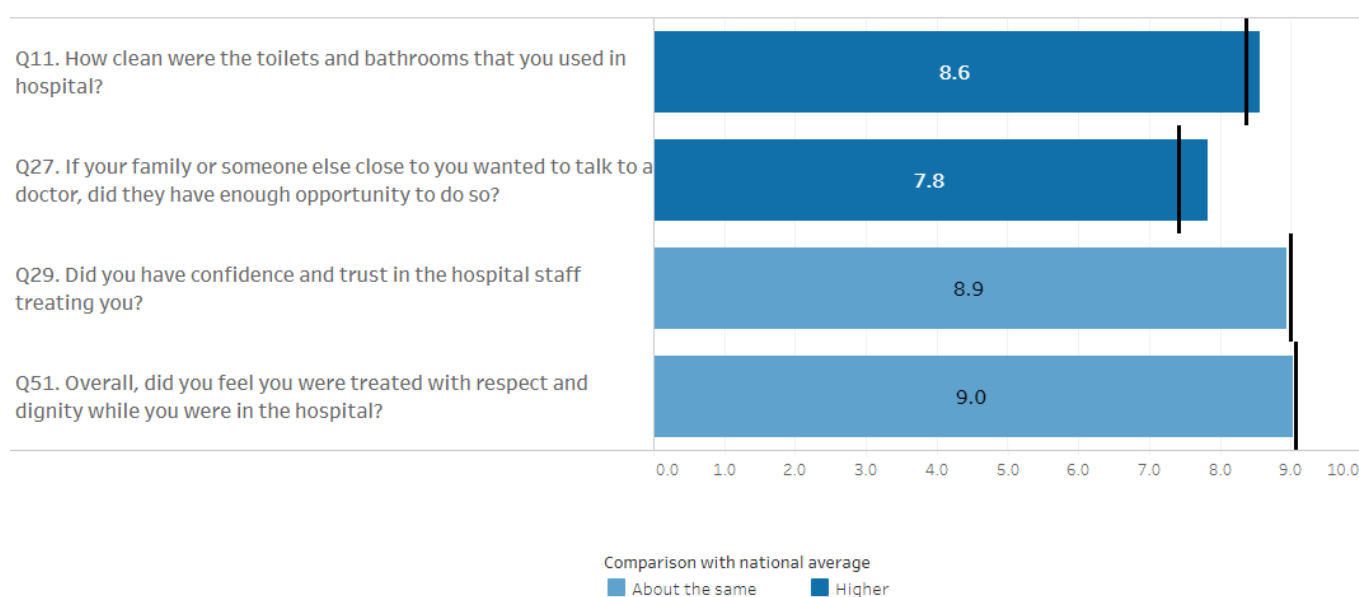
Other, more general experiences of care such as cleanliness of bathrooms and toilets, trust and confidence in hospital staff.

4 QUESTIONS

Other aspects of care

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

Figure 12 Galway University Hospitals scores for 'other aspects of care'*



*The black line represents the national average

Other aspects of care: what do these results mean?

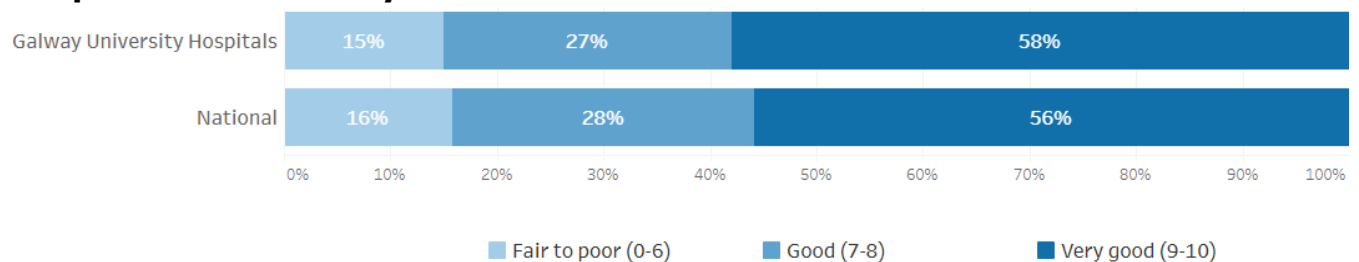
Most participants said they were always treated with respect and dignity. Despite scoring above the national average for Q27, a number of patients said that there were insufficient opportunities for their families to talk to a doctor.

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. 58% of participants from Galway University Hospitals rated their care as very good, slightly above the national figure of 56%.

Figure 13 compares the average overall rating of hospital experience for Galway University Hospitals with the national average.

Figure 13 Overall rating of hospital experience for Galway University Hospitals 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, 1,399 comments were received from patients of Galway University Hospitals 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 'physical environment', 'hospital staff', 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

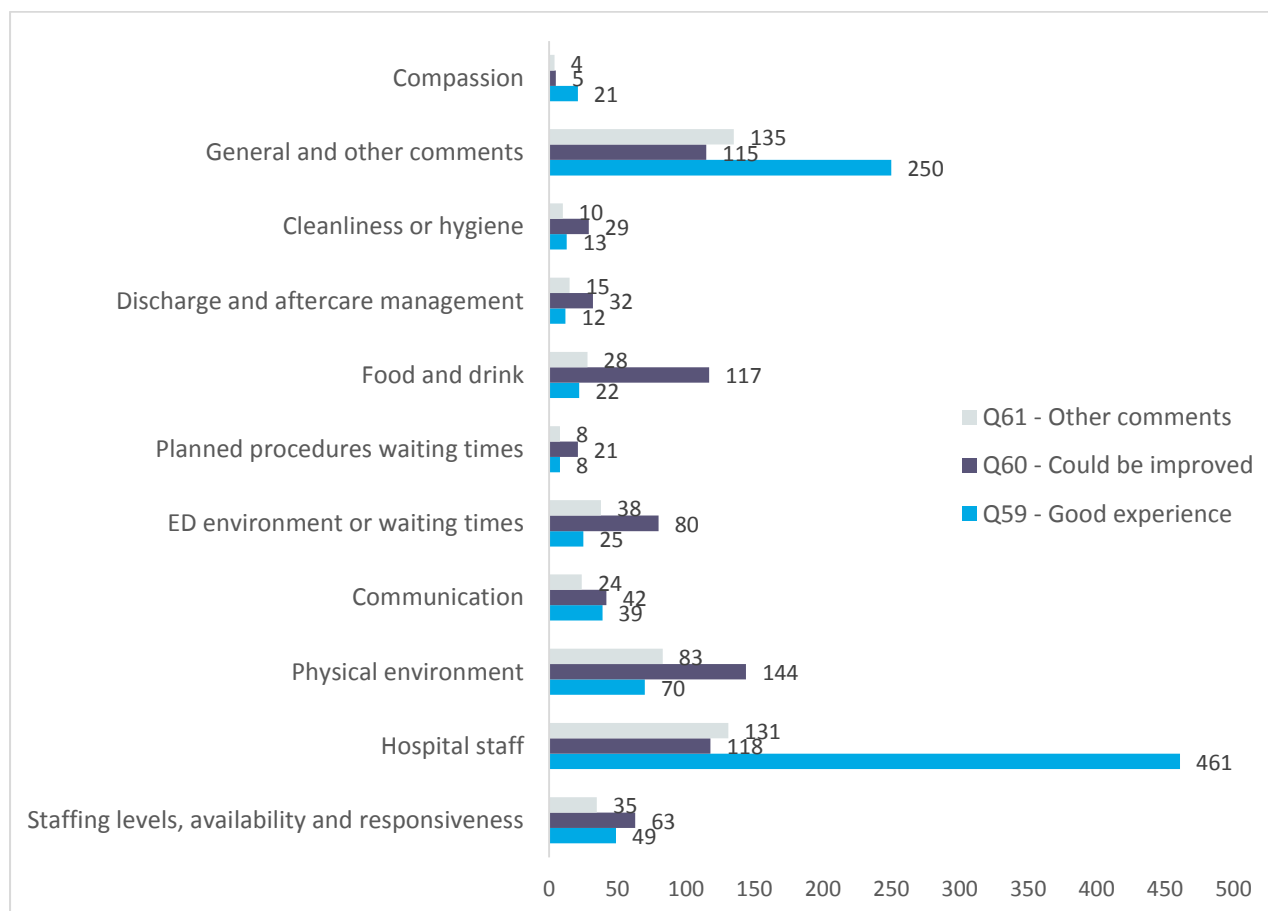


Figure 15 Example comments

Positive comments

"Nursing, catering and cleaning staff as well as the consultant teams were all excellent and always helpful, dealing with, in my own case, and other patients with major problems."	"Every doctor and nurse treated me as if I were the only person there, gave me their full attention at all times and answered all my questions with great patience. God bless them all."
"The doctors and nurses would take the time to explain everything about my condition and any medicine I was on. With being always in good humour no matter how busy they were they would still have time to speak with you"	"I cannot fault the way in which I was treated. Everyone was very kind, informative and took time to talk to me and explain what was being done. I was very impressed by the co-ordination between the various specialties — everything was joined up."
"Clean, modern, comfortable room."	"Faultless in every aspect. Pleasantly surprised as this is an old building. The kindness and care from each and every member of staff — beyond reproach."

Suggestions for improvement

"Temperature of meals: although the quality of the food was good, most of the meals were lukewarm or cold by the time they reached the patient."
"Name badges should be worn by all staff and they should introduce themselves, especially nurses and HCA's. Windows were sealed and there was no fresh air. The food was bad. No fruit available. Too much waste, no recycling and machines and lights were left switched on for no reason."
"Understand pressures of health system but spent two days on a trolley in corridor with no call bell — no one checking on me — I was in a lot of pain at one stage."

Conclusion

What were patients' experiences of hospital care in Galway University Hospitals in May 2019?

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

Galway University Hospitals received an above-average score for the 'discharge or transfer' stage of care, with the other stages scoring close to the national average. Participant ratings of 'discharge or transfer' were significantly higher than those received in 2018. There were no other significant changes in ratings of care since the 2018 survey.

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 were given enough time to discuss their care and treatment with a doctor, and said that they received answers they could understand when they had questions. The majority of participants said that there were sufficient opportunities for their families to talk to a doctor.

Two areas needing improvement were also identified. While the majority of patients said they had enough privacy in the emergency department while being examined or treated, nonetheless, the hospital scored below the national average for this question. In addition, while most patients rated the hospital food positively, Galway University Hospitals still scored below the national average for this question.

The findings of the 2019 survey will be used to help Galway University Hospitals improve the experiences of patients in the hospitals.

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 waited before being admitted to a ward. The relationship between waiting times and patients' ratings of their overall experience was weak. This means that even if patients had short waiting time they may have given negative ratings of their overall experience, or if they had long waiting times, patients may still have given positive ratings of their overall experience.

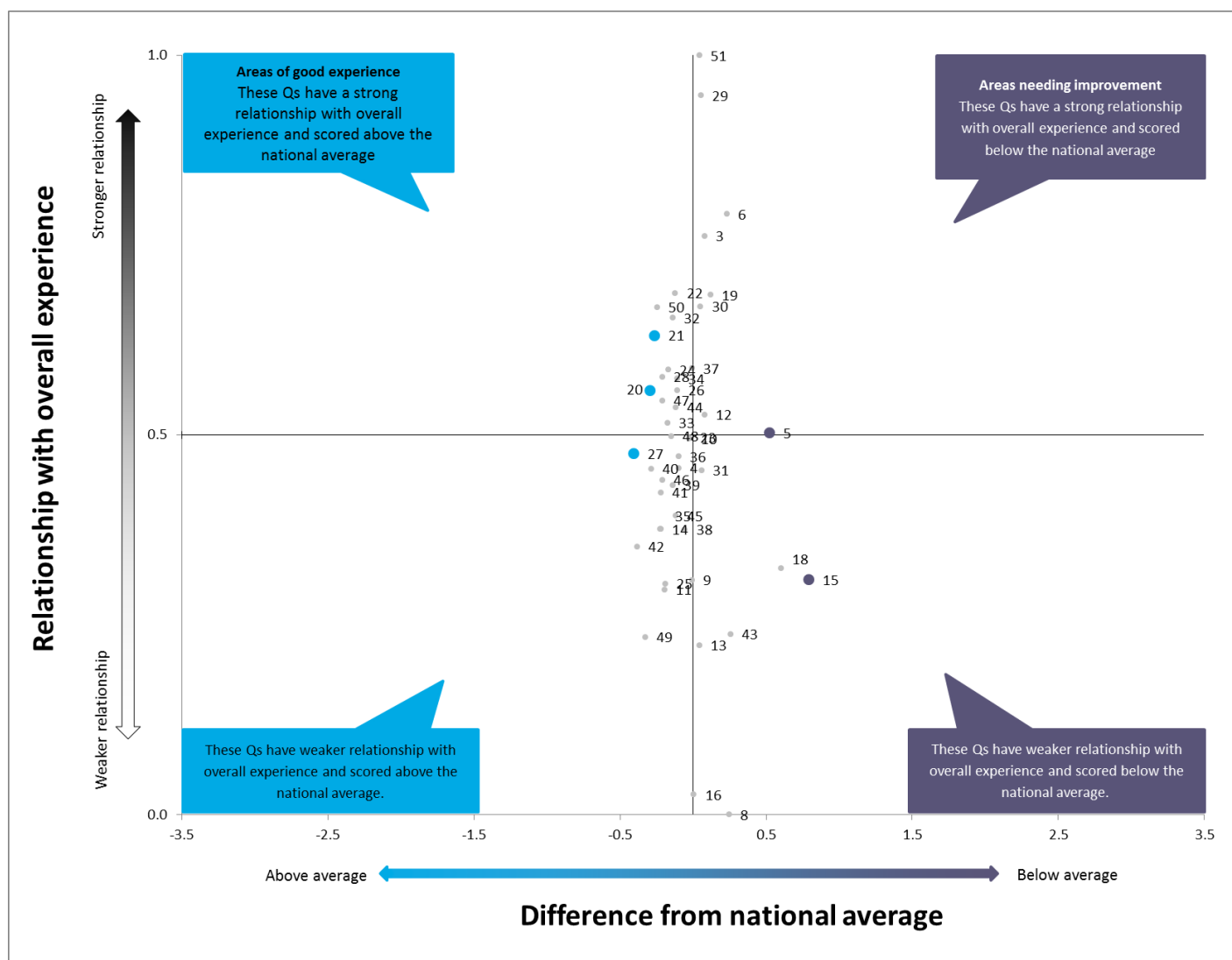
It is useful for hospitals to know which questions strongly relate to their patients' overall experience as these are the areas on which they should focus their improvement efforts.

In Figure 16, each dot shows a specific survey question for Galway University Hospitals. 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 Galway University Hospitals



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.