

National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019

Letterkenny University Hospital

2019 survey results

Respondents



335

Number of respondents



66.5

Average age



44%

Participation rate

Overall experience

2019

Very Good
56%

Good
28%

Fair to Poor
16%

2018

Very Good
58%

Good
28%

Fair to Poor
14%

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

Stages of care



Admission to hospital

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



Care on the ward

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



Examination, diagnosis and treatment

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



Discharge or transfer

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



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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%. 335 patients from Letterkenny 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 Letterkenny University Hospital?

The majority of participants from Letterkenny University Hospital reported positive experiences in hospital. 84% of participants said they had good or very good overall experiences, compared with 84% nationally. The hospital scored below the national average for questions on 'care on the ward', while ratings of the other stages of care were about the same as the national average.²

One area of good experience was identified. Many patients gave positive ratings of the hospital food and the hospital scored above the national average for this question.

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'.

There were also three areas needing improvement. While the majority of patients said that the staff treating and examining them introduced themselves, the hospital scored below the average for this question. Patients also said that staff did not always wear name badges, and some patients said they did not get sufficient help to eat their meals.

There were no significant differences in patients' ratings of the stages of care compared with the 2018 survey.

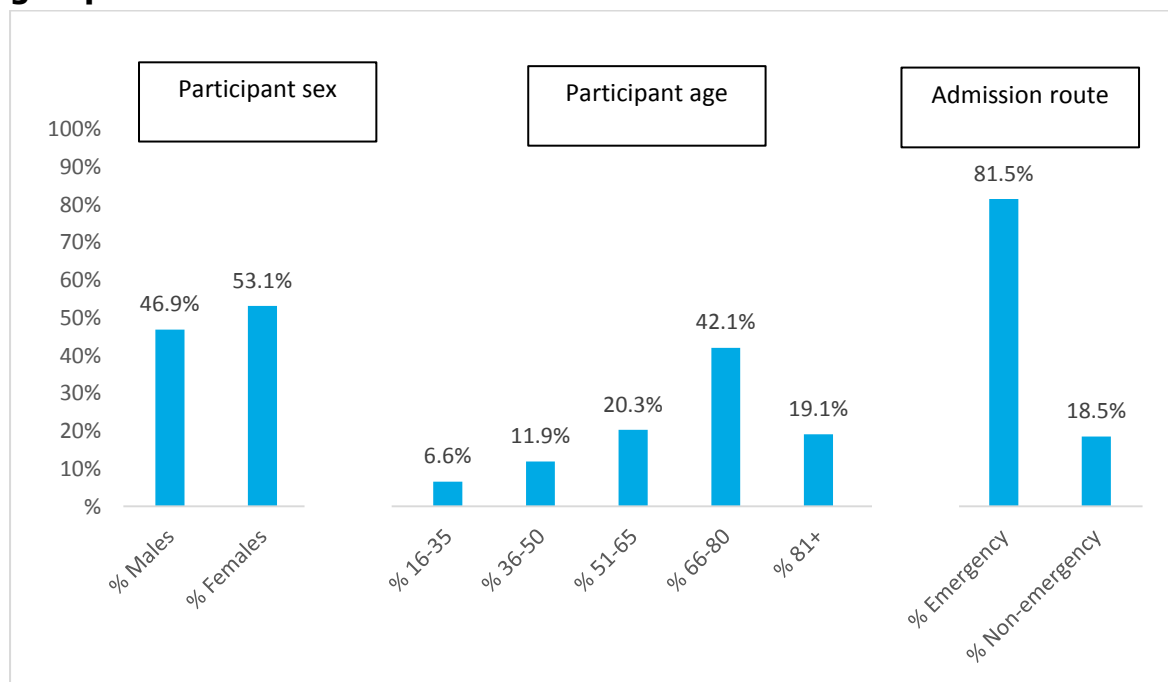
The findings of the 2019 survey will help Letterkenny University Hospital to improve patients' experiences of care in hospital.

Hospital and participant profile

Letterkenny University Hospital is located in Co. Donegal. There were 323 inpatient beds available in the hospital during the survey period of May 2019.

771 people discharged from Letterkenny University Hospital during the month of May 2019 were invited to participate in the survey. 335 people completed the survey, achieving a response rate of 44%. 46.9% of participants were male and 53.1% were female. 273 respondents (81.5%) 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 Letterkenny University Hospital.

Figure 1 Participants from Letterkenny 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 Letterkenny University Hospital are:

Care on the ward

Food rating | Q15

Of the 322 people who answered this question, 280 (87%) rated the hospital food as good or very good.

The areas needing improvement in Letterkenny University Hospital are:

Care on the ward

Staff name badges | Q13

Of the 276 people who answered this question, 202 (73%) said that all staff wore name badges. This was below the national average for this question.

Care on the ward

Staff introductions | Q14

Of the 320 people who answered this question, 213 (67%) said that the staff treating and examining them always introduced themselves. This was below the national average for this question.

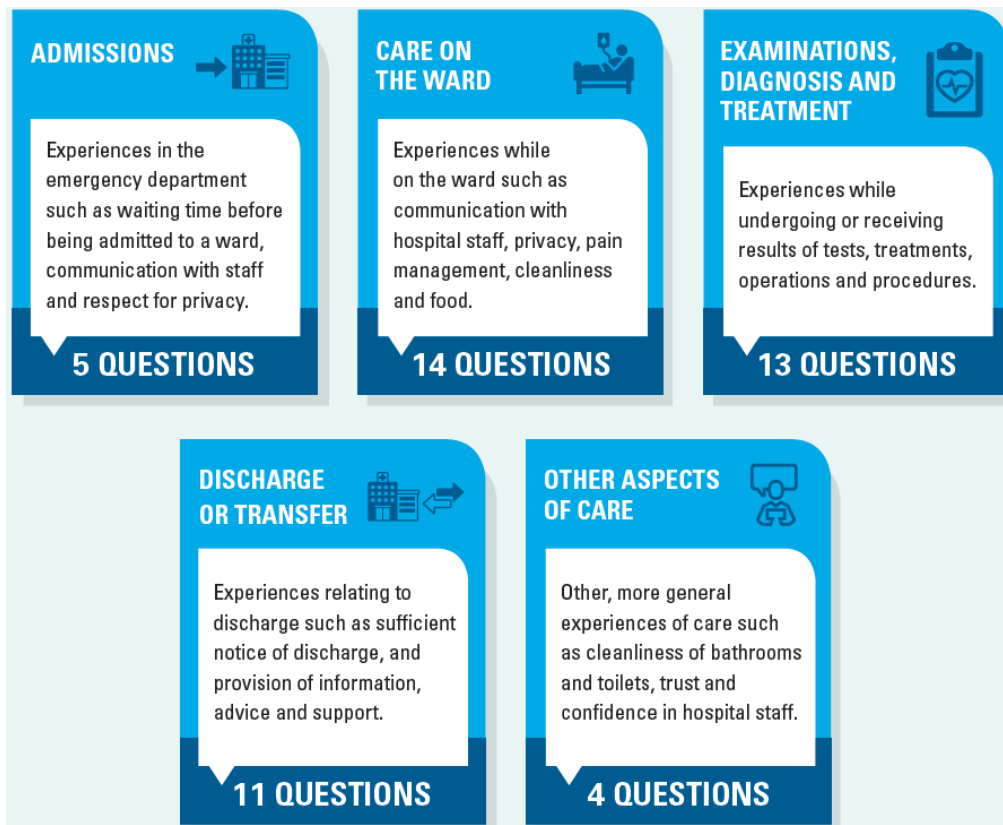
Care on the ward

Clear answers from a doctor | Q20

Of the 305 people who said they had questions to ask a doctor, (62%) said that they always got an answers they could understand. However, 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 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'.

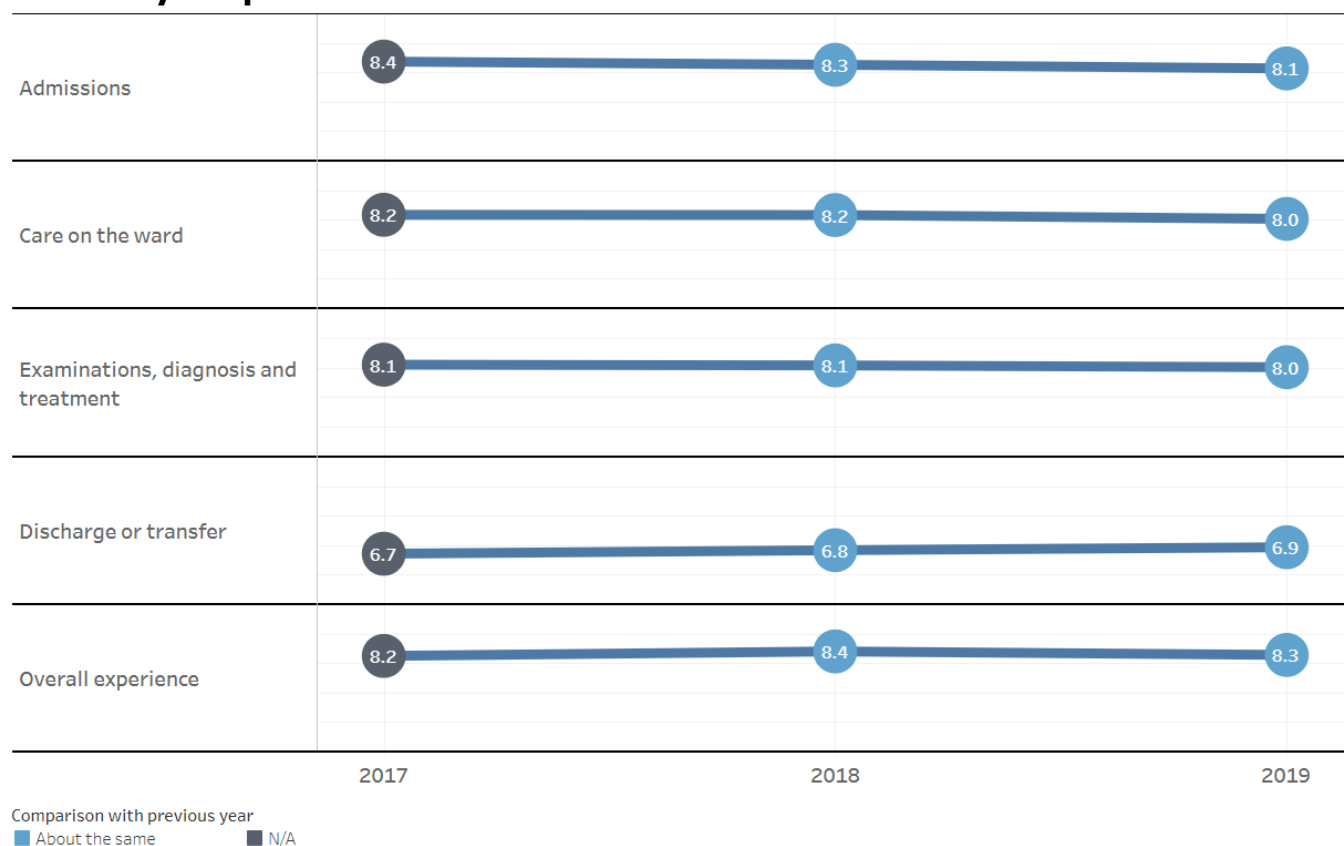
For further information on the analyses please consult Appendix 3 of the 2019 national report, available from www.yourexperience.ie.

Changes in patient experience over time

There were no significant changes in patient experience from 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 Letterkenny 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 Letterkenny University Hospital with the national average score for 'admissions' (out of a maximum of 10).

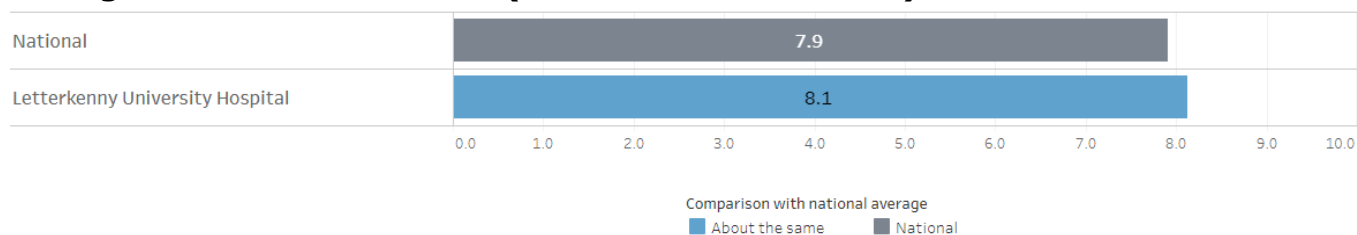
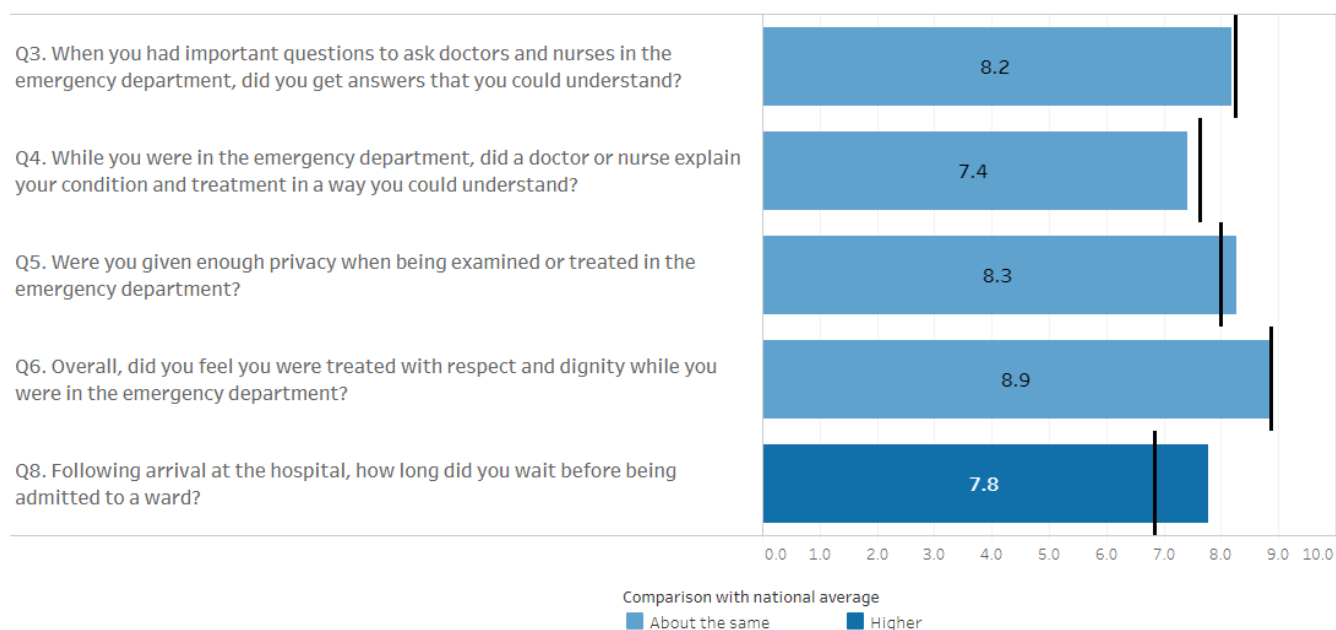


Figure 4 Letterkenny University Hospital scores for questions on 'admissions'*



*The black line represents the national average

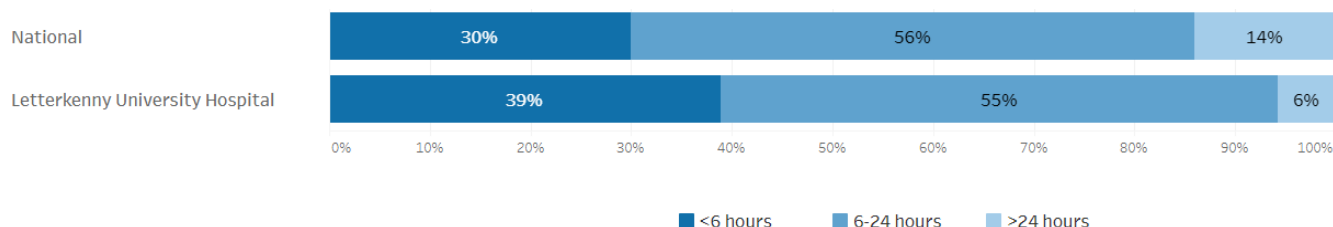
Emergency department waiting times⁴

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 Letterkenny University Hospital, 101 respondents (39%) said they were admitted to a ward within six hours of arriving at the emergency department, while 144 respondents (55%) reported waiting between six and 24 hours. 15 respondents (6%) said that they waited 24 hours or more before being admitted to a ward in Letterkenny University Hospital, with three 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 Letterkenny University Hospital, compared with the national average.

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



Admissions: what do these results mean?

Patient ratings of admission to Letterkenny University Hospital were similar to the national average and to the hospital's 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 whether a patient's condition and treatment was explained to them in a way they could understand.

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

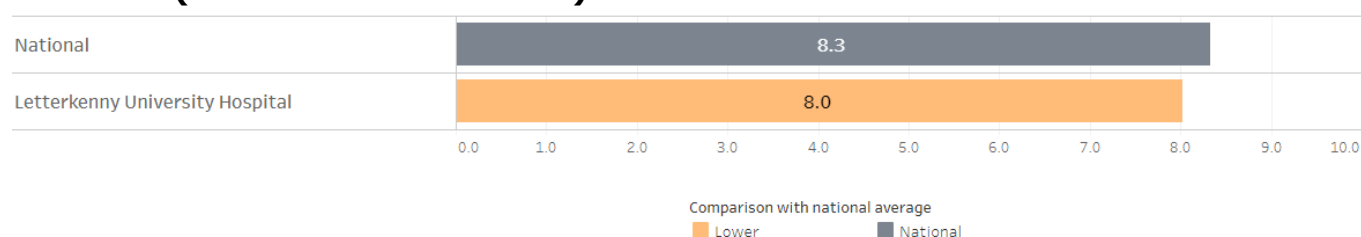
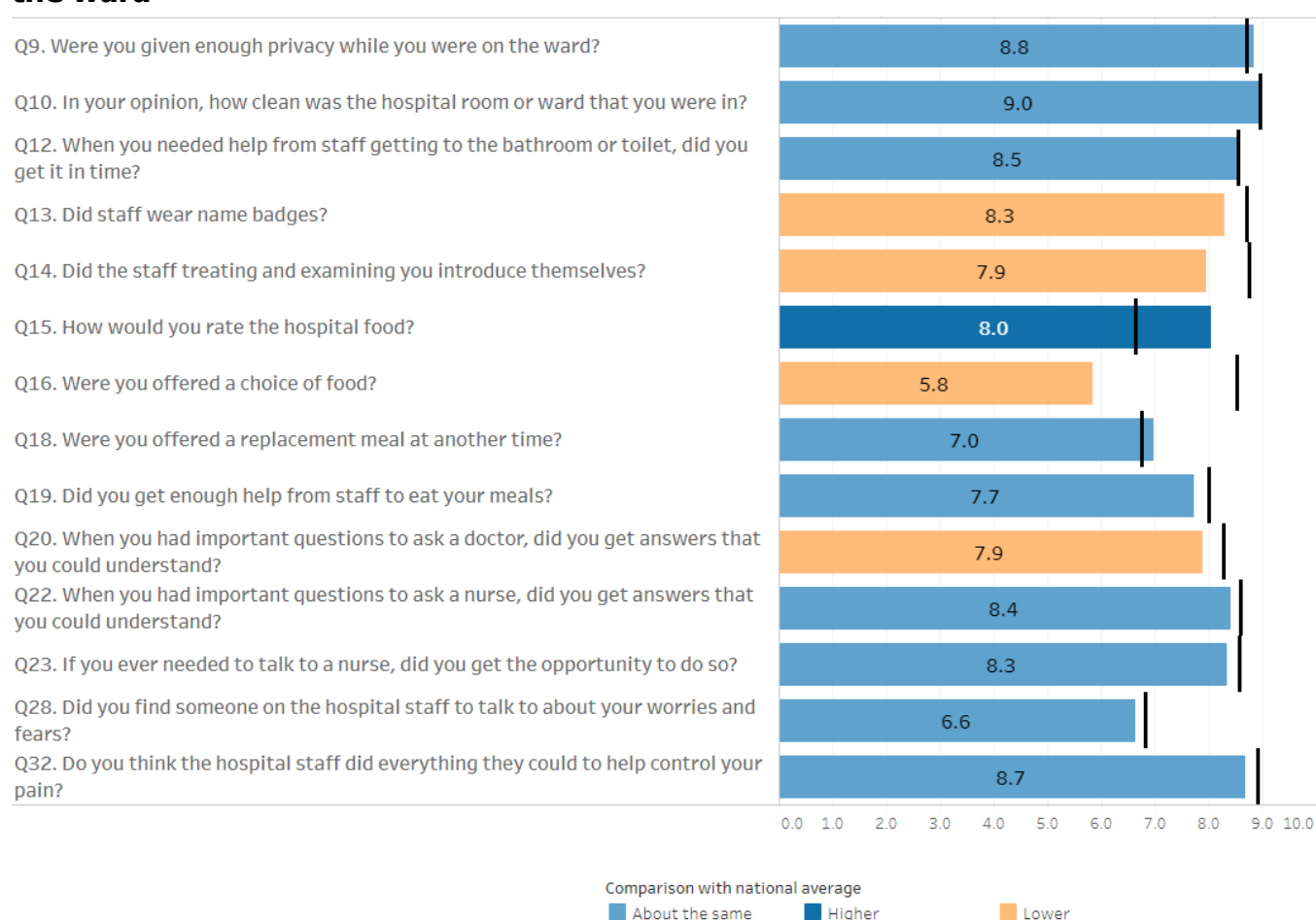


Figure 7 Letterkenny University Hospital scores for questions on 'care on the ward'*



*The black line represents the national average

Care on the ward: what do these results mean?

Patient ratings of 'care on the ward' in Letterkenny University Hospital received were below the national average, and similar 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 whether patients were offered a choice of food.



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

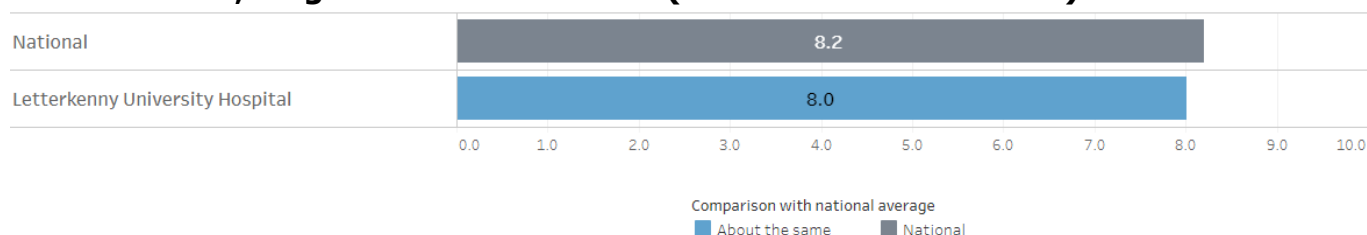
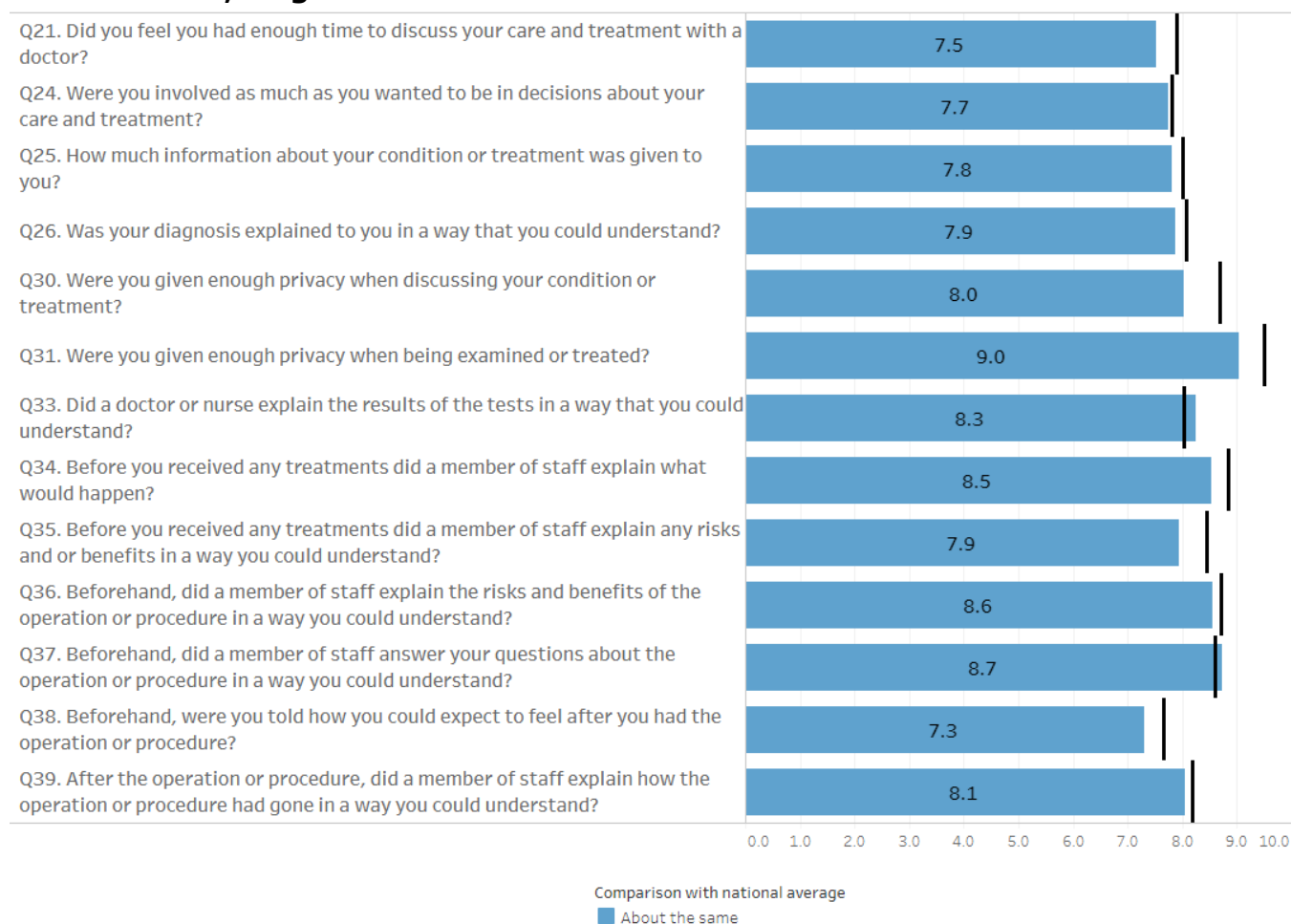


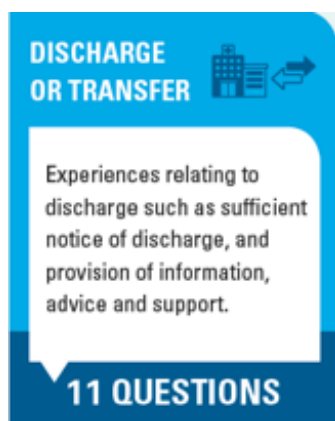
Figure 9 Letterkenny University Hospital scores for questions on 'examinations, diagnosis and treatment'*



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

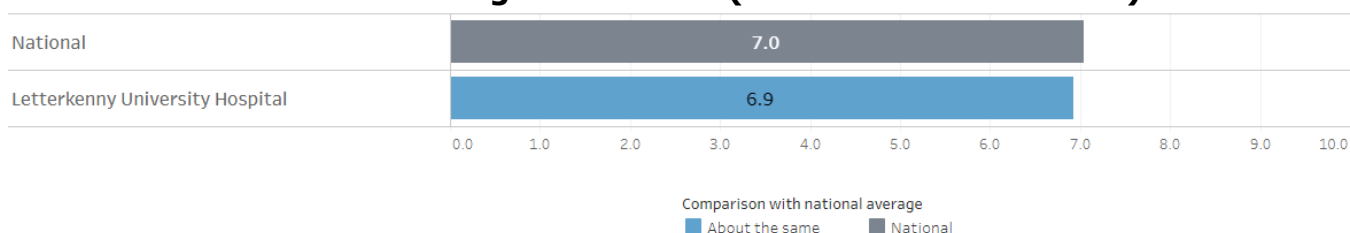
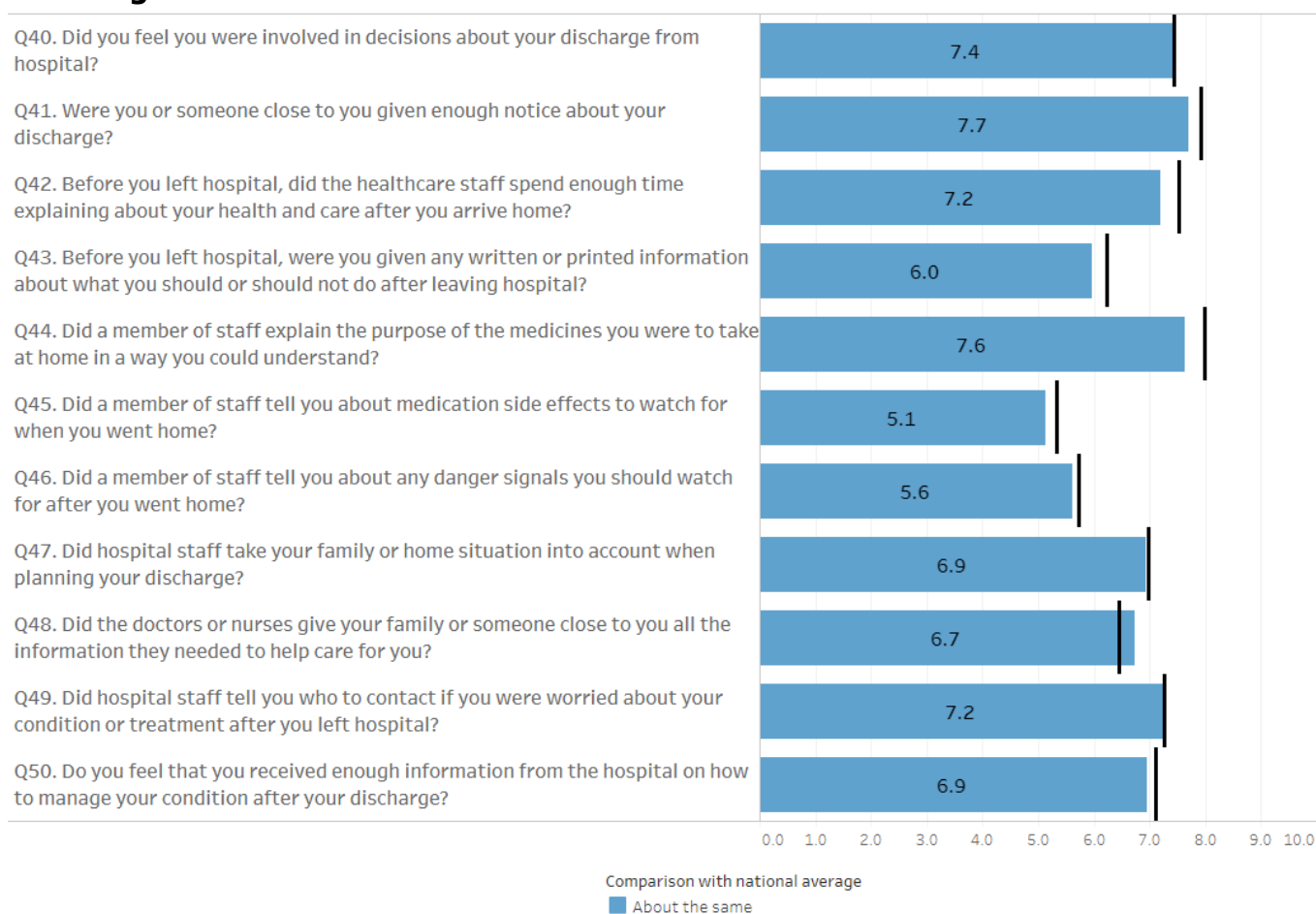


Figure 11 Letterkenny University Hospital scores for questions on 'discharge or transfer'*



*The black line represents the national average

Discharge or transfer: what do these results mean?

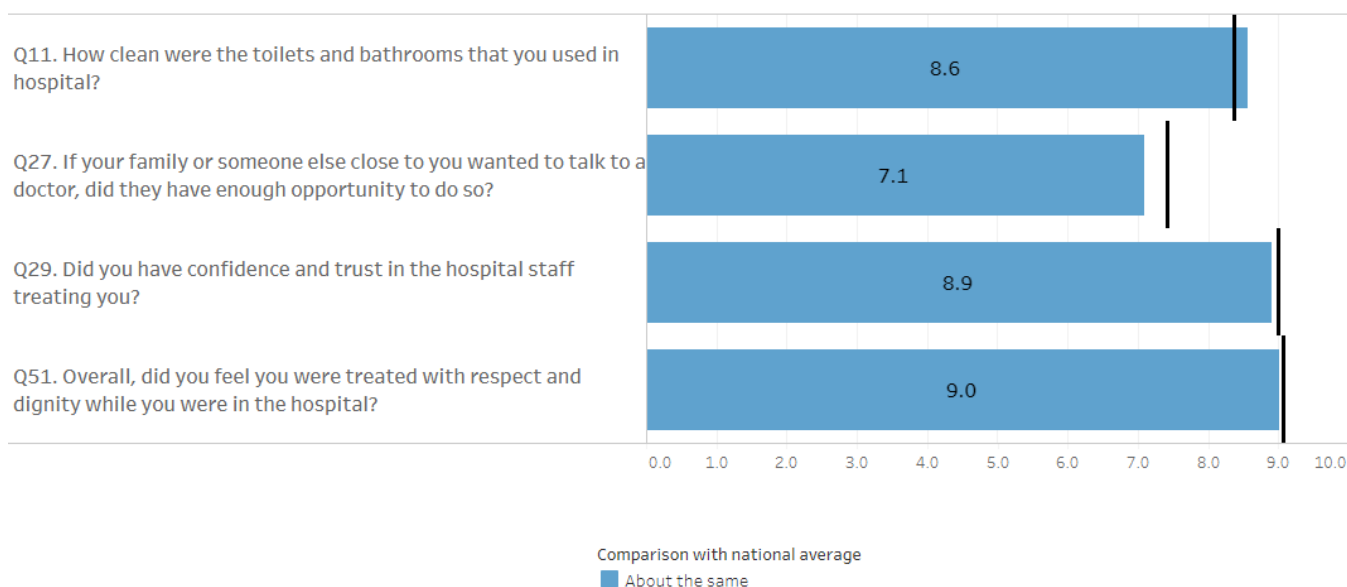
Participant ratings for this stage of care were similar to the national average and to last year's survey. Most patients said that staff explained the purpose of medications they were to take at home. The lowest scoring question for this stage related to whether the potential side effects of medications were explained to patients.



Other aspects of care

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

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



*The black line represents the national average

Other aspects of care: what do these results mean?

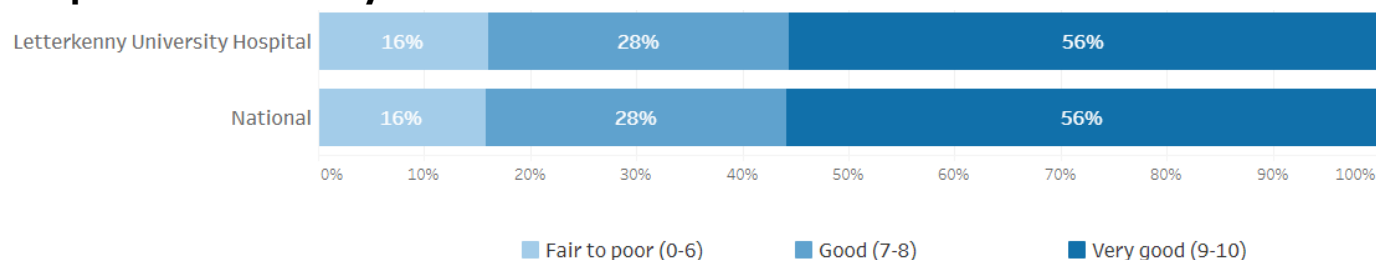
Most participants said they were always treated with respect and dignity while in hospital. On the other hand, a number of patients said that there were insufficient opportunities for their families to talk to a doctor.

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. 56% of participants from Letterkenny 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 Letterkenny University Hospital with the national average.

Figure 13 Overall rating of hospital experience for Letterkenny 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, 488 comments were received from patients of Letterkenny 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 'food and drink' themes. Most patient suggestions for improvement related to the 'hospital staff', 'physical environment', and 'staffing levels' 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

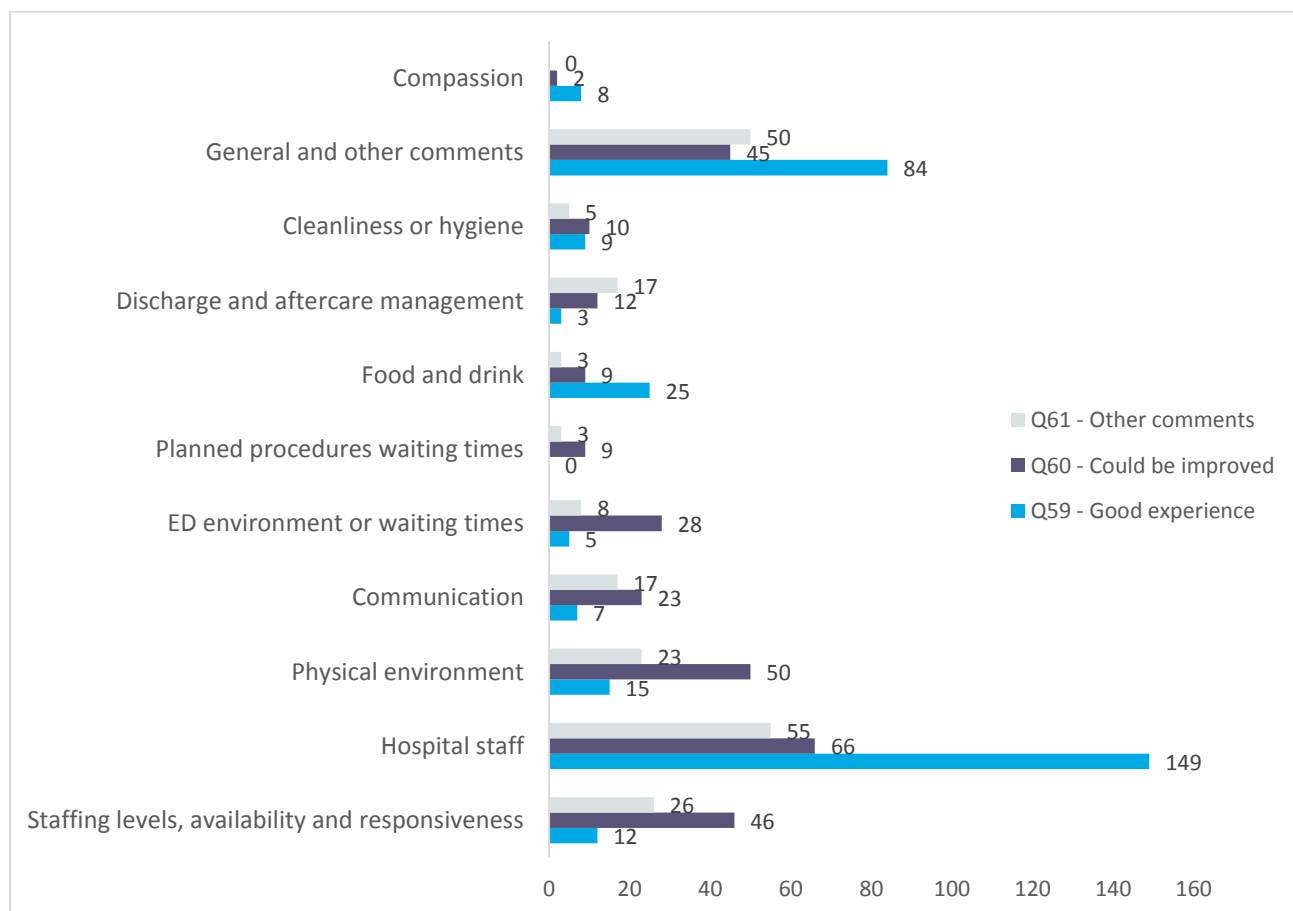


Figure 15 Example comments

Positive comments

"Doctors were fantastic and tests needed such as emergency MRI were done quickly."	"The staff, from the doctors to the cleaners were exceptionally nice. The medical staff were very reassuring and easy to approach with questions."
"My experience in the hospital was very positive. The nurses were very kind and helped me relax. And anyone I was in contact with was very helpful and nice."	"Found the staff all to be very professional and caring, nothing was an effort. I was under various disciplines and my follow ups to date have in relation to appointments etc. gone as indicated at time of my discharge."
"The meals were very good. There was a variety of breakfasts in morning, lunch was soup and sandwiches of which there was a variety of fillings, dinner was very good but there was no choice as far as I could tell. I really enjoyed the meals offered to me and I had a good experience overall."	"Ward was modern and clean. Staff very helpful and pleasant and had good time for patients. All good with this visit."

Suggestions for improvement

"There could have been better communication between the consultants and nursing staff and then to patients. Afterwards there was no communication from hospital to my GP."
"The doctors could have spent more time discussing the treatment and reasons for it with me. They always seemed to be in a rush. The staff should speak to the next of kin to ensure home treatment and discharge is understood."
"I don't eat fish but there was no choice on the Friday so I didn't have much to eat, only the potatoes."

Conclusion

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

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

Letterkenny University Hospital received a below-average score for the 'care on the ward' stage of care and ratings that were about the same as the national average for the other stages of care. Participant ratings of care were generally similar to those received in 2018.

One area of good experience was identified. For example, many patients gave positive ratings of the hospital food and the hospital scored above the national average for this question.

There were also three areas needing improvement. While the majority of patients said that the staff treating and examining them introduced themselves, the hospital scored below the average for this question. Patients also said that staff did not always wear name badges. In addition, some patients said they did not get sufficient help with their meals.

The findings of the 2019 survey will be used to help Letterkenny 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 29 which asked patients if they had confidence and trust in hospital staff had a strong relationship with overall experience. This means that patients who said that they had confidence and trust in staff were very likely to give a positive rating of their overall experience. Patients who did not have confidence and trust 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 16 which asked patients if that were offered a choice of food. The relationship between being offered a choice of food and patients' ratings of their overall experience was weak. This means that even patients were always offered a choice of food, they may have given negative ratings of their overall experience, or if they were never offered a choice of food, patients may still have given positive ratings of their overall experience.

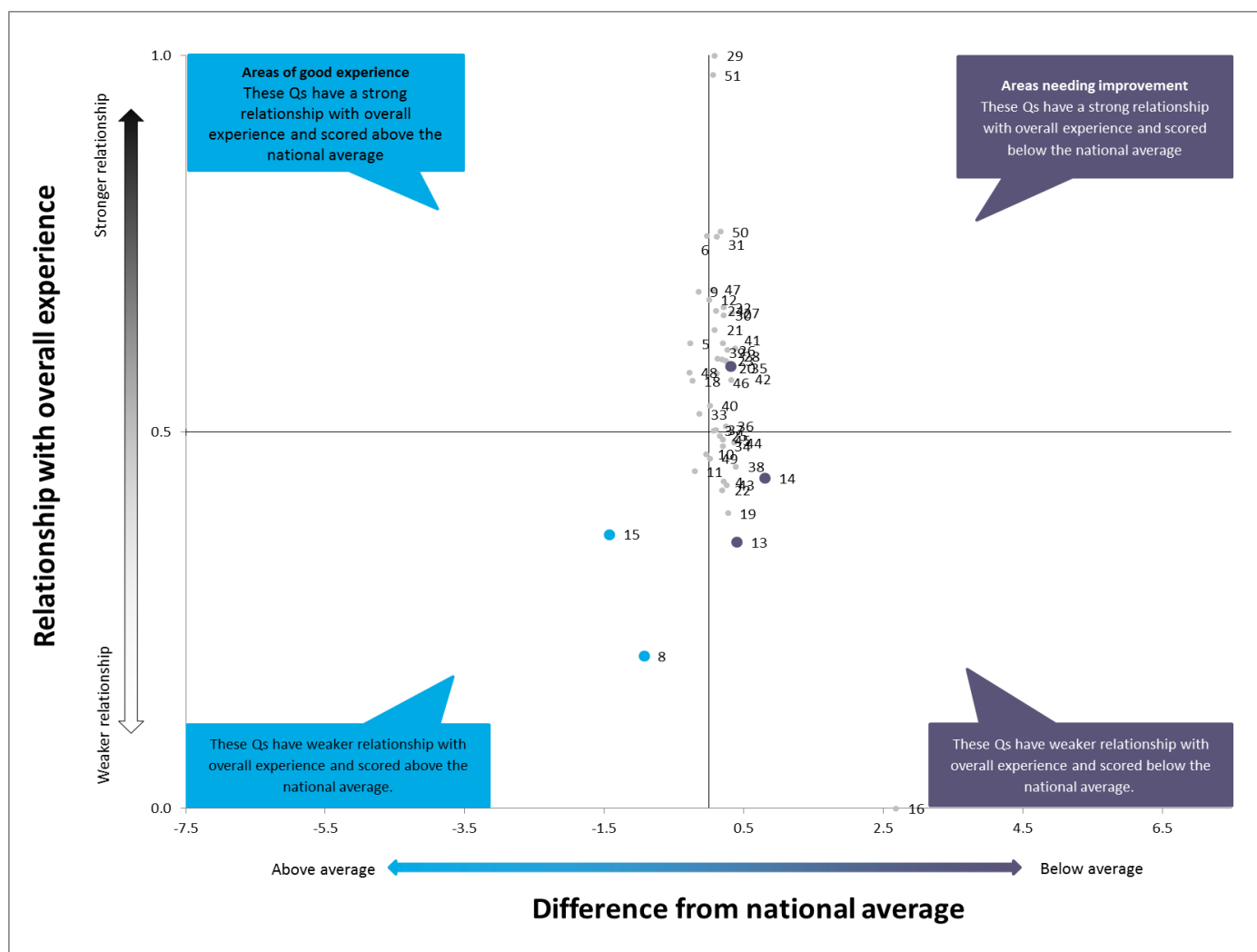
It is useful for hospitals to know which questions strongly relate to their patients' overall experience as these are the areas on which they should focus their improvement efforts.

In Figure 16, each dot shows a specific survey question for Letterkenny 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 Letterkenny 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.