

Bayside Medicare Local

A Pilot Study of Patients' Experiences of primary health care services

The aim of the pilot project is to investigate firsthand consumer experiences of primary health care services. The pilot project will use qualitative methodologies.

Approximately 30 people who have used a primary health care service in the Bayside Medicare Local area within the previous month will be asked to describe their experiences.

The results of the research are not intended to be generalisable, nor is the sample representative in the standard scientific sense. However, based on previous research investigating consumer views, it is anticipated that 30 participants who use a range of primary health care services will provide diverse insights and reflections.

Stage 1: Workshop

Practitioners from a range of primary health care services and consumers will be invited to attend a 2-hour workshop. The aim is to include approximately equal numbers of practitioners and consumers, with a total of 10 participants attending the workshop. The practitioners and consumers will be remunerated.

All participants will be given some literature to read prior to the workshop, including a review of the literature on Patients' Experiences that was recently commissioned by Bayside Medicare Local.

During the workshop, practitioners and consumers will work together to develop specific questions for the questionnaire. The questionnaire will focus on six (6) generic themes that are known to be important to patients, with an aim to develop 3-4 questions per theme. The six (6) generic themes are:

- Feeling informed
- Staff who listen and spend time with patient
- Being treated as a person, not a number
- Patient involvement in care and being able to ask questions
- The value of support services
- Efficient processes

The outcome of the workshop will be a list of approximately 20 questions.

Stage 2: Recruitment

The aim is to recruit at least 30 participants from a range of age, sociodemographic groups and medical conditions who have attended at least one primary health care service in the Bayside Medicare Local area within the past month. All participants will be over 18 years of age.

The following three (3) recruitment strategies will be used:

- (1) Flyers and posters inviting people to participate in the project will be:
 - Placed in waiting rooms of some primary health care services
 - Distributed to people who attend consumer groups
- (2) Information about the project will also be placed on the Bayside Medicare Local website and in the BML Bulletin.
- (3) A media release will be prepared with staff of Bayside Medicare Local. It is anticipated that local media coverage about the project will facilitate recruitment.

The principal researcher's contact details (phone and email) will be listed in the advertisements. Those who contact the researcher to say that they are interested in participating in the pilot study will be sent further information (i.e. plain language statement) by mail or email. All participants will be asked to sign a consent form prior to their participation.

Stage 3: Data collection

Multiple methods will be used to collect data. Participants will be able to choose from the following three (3) methods:

- Telephone interview
- Paper-based questionnaire
- Online questionnaire (Survey Monkey)

The first part of the interview/questionnaire will collect demographic information such as age, gender and primary health care service(s) used during the past month. The second part will include a maximum of 20 open-ended questions, as agreed upon at the workshop, plus some Likert scale questions.

The paper-based questionnaire and online survey will include identical questions. The telephone interviews will provide an opportunity for some additional probing questions, as deemed appropriate by the interviewer.

The paper-based questionnaire and online survey will take 15-30 minutes to complete, depending, in part, on the length of the written answers. Individual telephone interviews will be approximately 20-30 minutes duration. With participants' permission, all interviews will be audio-recorded though not professionally transcribed. Only the significant quotes from each interview will be transcribed verbatim.

Stage 4: Data analysis

The qualitative data will be critically analysed using thematic analysis. This method of analysis is a qualitative research method that is used to generate common themes.

Stage 5: Dissemination

All participants will receive a Participant Report that will include the findings of the research. A Final Research Report will also be disseminated to practitioners. In addition, practitioners of the primary health care services that assisted with recruitment, and consumers from the consumer groups that participated, will be invited to a seminar in which the findings will be discussed.