Evaluation of patients' assessment of day hospital care

H. PEACH AND M. S. PATHY
From the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff

SUMMARY The method of linear analogue self-assessment (LASA) was used to quantify the views concerning day care which were held by patients attending a geriatric day hospital. The results suggest that day hospitals are an acceptable form of care for the elderly.

Although during the past 18 years there has been a steady increase in the number of geriatric day hospitals in the UK, the attitude of the patients to day hospital care has been largely ignored. The few measurements of the success of day hospitals have been objective—such as, ultimate outcome for the patients (Woodford-Williams et al., 1962; Blake, 1968; Brocklehurst, 1970; Millard and Martin, unpublished). To try to find out the patients' views on day hospital care the technique of LASA was introduced at the St David's Day Hospital, Cardiff.

Patients and methods

For this study 15 questions were used covering most aspects of day hospital care (Table 1). For each question a 5 cm or 10 cm line was drawn and the ends of the line were labelled with words descriptive of the extremes of the response. The patient was asked to mark the line at the point most appropriate to her feelings at that moment. The distance in cm along the line to this mark (questions 4, 6-8, 10, 12, 14, 15) or from the centre of the line to mark (questions 1-3, 5, 9, 11, 13) gave a score out of 5. The questions were read to the patients by two lay persons who were not involved in the day hospital but who had extensive experience of interviewing patients. Patients attending the day hospital for the first time were interviewed at the end of the first month after their admission.

To assess the reliability of the technique a sample of patients completed the questionnaire with each of the interviewers separately in the same week, and a further sample completed the questionnaire alone and again with an interviewer in the same week.

Results

Fifty-one patients were used in the study of whom 19

Table 1 Questionnaire completed by patients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score 0</th>
<th>Score 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Is the time you leave home in the mornings too early?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Is the time you get home in the evenings too late?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Is the amount of time you spend travelling each day too long?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Is the journey to and from the day hospital not enjoyable?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Is the amount of time you spend at the day hospital each day too short?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>How helpful has the day hospital been not helpful?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>How enjoyable is it to attend the day hospital not enjoyable?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>How helpful is the time you spend with the doctor not helpful?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Is the amount of time you spend with the doctor each day too short?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>How helpful is the time you spend with the physiotherapists not helpful?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Is the amount of time you spend with the physiotherapists too short?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>How helpful is the time you spend with the occupational therapists not helpful?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Is the amount of time you spend with the occupational therapists too long?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>How helpful is the time when you are not with the doctor or a physical therapist not helpful?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>How keen would you be to attend a day hospital again if the need arose? not keen?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dear Patient,
By answering the following questions you will tell us how beneficial your time at the day hospital has been. To answer each question simply mark the line with an X at the point most near to your present feelings.

1. Is the time you leave home in the mornings too early? (0) (5) (0)
2. Is the time you get home in the evenings too late? (0) (5) (0)
3. Is the amount of time you spend travelling each day too long? (0) (5) (0)
4. Is the journey to and from the day hospital not enjoyable? (0) (5)
5. Is the amount of time you spend at the day hospital each day too short? (0) (5)
6. How helpful has the day hospital been not helpful? (0) (5)
7. How enjoyable is it to attend the day hospital not enjoyable? (0) (5)
8. How helpful is the time you spend with the doctor not helpful? (0) (5)
9. Is the amount of time you spend with the doctor each day too short? (0) (5)
10. How helpful is the time you spend with the physiotherapists not helpful? (0) (5)
11. Is the amount of time you spend with the physiotherapists too short? (0) (5)
12. How helpful is the time you spend with the occupational therapists not helpful? (0) (5)
13. Is the amount of time you spend with the occupational therapists too long? (0) (5)
14. How helpful is the time when you are not with the doctor or a physical therapist not helpful? (0) (5)
15. How keen would you be to attend a day hospital again if the need arose? not keen? (0) (5)
were men. The number of patients excluded because
they had poor vision or were confused was small.
The mean age of the men was 75 years (range 65-83)
and that of the women 76 years (range 66-88). Most
of the patients were brought to the day hospital by
ambulance, only three using private transport. All
but eight patients, seven women and one man,
received physical treatment. All patients received
medical and nursing care and in 14 of the subjects,
five men and nine women, there was an element of
social care.
Correlation between the patients' scores obtained
by the two interviewers in the replicated sample was
an element (r = 0.85). However, correlation between
the patients' scores obtained with and without the
interviewer present was poor.
The mean score for each of the 15 questions is
shown in Table 2. The mean score for most of the
questions was high. Both the men and the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

women were keen to attend a day hospital
again if the need arose. However, there was a differ-
ence in the mean score for some of the questions
between the men and the women. The men did not
find the journey to and from the day hospital as
enjoyable as did the women. Moreover the men
were dissatisfied with the amount of time they spent
at the day hospital each day (11 indicated it was too
much, only eight indicated that it was about right)
and did not find the time spent with the operations
therapists as helpful as did the women. The women
on the other hand did not find the time spent with
the doctor as helpful as did the men.

Discussion

Correlation between the patients' scores with and
without the interviewers was poor as many of the
patients who appeared to understand the instructions
on the questionnaire failed to follow them when
answering the questions by themselves. With the
interviewers the LASA technique proved an easily
quantifiable way for the patients to record their
assessments of day hospital care. The good
correlation between the scores obtained by the
two interviewers proved it to be reliable.
The high scores given by the patients suggest
that on the whole they found the day hospital
a satisfactory form of care. Women more than men
tend to have multiple conditions and this may be one
reason why they found the medical care less
beneficial. Fifty-three per cent of the women had
three or more serious conditions compared with
only 26% of the men. Much of the occupational
therapy at St David's Day Hospital includes useful
activities of greater appeal to women and the
results were not unexpected.

We thank Mrs Jean Watson and Miss Sherri
Watson for interviewing the patients and Miss A. R.
McKelvie for typing the manuscript.

Reprints from H. Peach, 51 Arles Road, Cardiff
CF5 5AN.

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Evaluation of patients’ assessment of day hospital care.
H Peach and M S Pathy

doi: 10.1136/jech.31.3.209

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