



BORED ON THE WARD

Attitudes of elderly patients to activities provided at Wrexham Maelor Hospital

Dr Emily Sherley, Dr Blessing Otubelu,
Mr Steve Bodey, Dr Moustafa Abdelkader, Dr Zeenish Azhar,
Dr Asha Dhandapani, Dr Tajnin Mitu, Professor Peter Lepping



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

Background

The Older Persons Commissioner for Wales has highlighted how social isolation can have a negative effect on the health and well-being of older people. Studies have found that for many patients 'time passes very slowly in hospital'

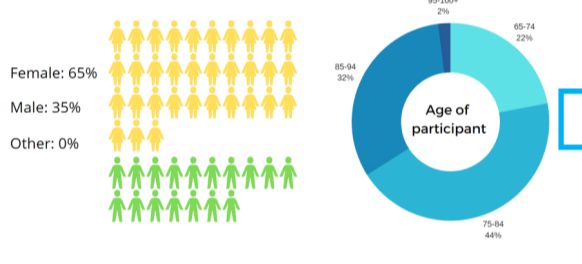
In the Liaison Psychiatry service we see many elderly patients on the medical wards. BCUHB does not have the bedside 'patient entertainment units' (containing a TV, phone and radio) that many hospitals do. Frequency of visitors varies, and when asked what they do during the day, when they have no visitors, patients often say 'Nothing'.

We felt that this lack of stimulation may affect recovery in elderly patients. In the first instance, we set out to determine whether our local patients felt lack of activity to be a problem. Our aim was to provide the hospital with this data, as well as allow us to make suggestions about potential activities to the activity coordinators.

Method

We designed a survey to assess the interests of our patients, their current levels of boredom, and their suggestions for activities. We surveyed 51 patients, aged over 65, on 5 wards in the Wrexham Maelor Hospital from November 2019 to February 2020.

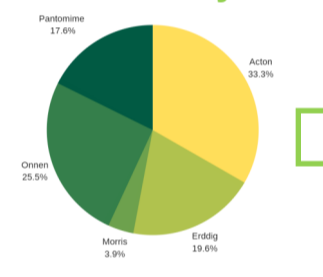
Participants



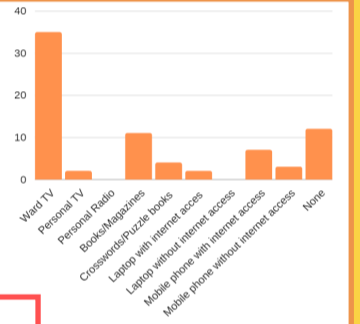
What are your hobbies?



Ward surveyed



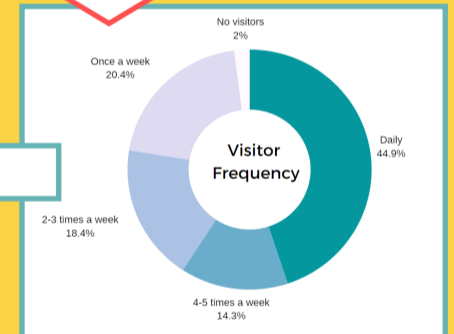
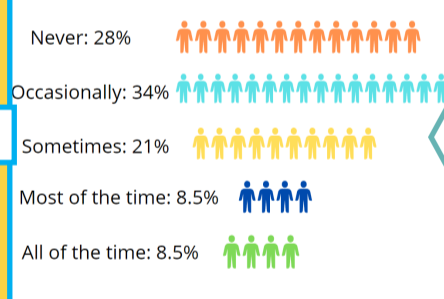
Which activities are available on the ward?



Boredom by visitor number



If I have no visitors, I am bored...



What activities would you like to see on the ward?



Results

72% of patients reported at least occasional boredom on the ward. Patients in side rooms had televisions, but those in the main bays either had no TV, or one for the whole ward, which often they could not hear or see. Radios were not available unless brought from home. Patients either said there were no activities provided by the wards, or did not know of any.

However, while we had expected that boredom would be more likely if people had no visitors or infrequent visitors, this did not appear to be the case. In fact, those who reported they were bored most or all of the time were those with visitors from 2-3 times a week to daily, with the most of these patients in the group who had daily visitors. This could be due to expectation: perhaps those who expected visitors felt the time in between to be more boring, whereas those who had few visitors became used to having little stimulation. This needs more exploration.

Most patients reported having very little to entertain or occupy them on the ward. When asked what they would like, patients suggested activities that would be simple to provide, such as cards, dominoes or puzzles.

Conclusions and next steps

We plan to extend our survey to target our specific patient group – elderly patients who are open to liaison psychiatry. We will liaise with the activity co-ordinators in the hospital, focusing on suggestions made by patients, especially as they are so simple to provide in most cases. We hope to repeat the survey once more activities have been introduced.