

### 330: PATIENT SATISFACTION SCORES AND HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: WHOM TO REWARD?

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#### Objectives:

Within the US hospital industry, employee rewards and incentives are often tied to performance indicators, including patient satisfaction scores as a direct measure of quality of care. But how, specifically, should a reward/incentive system that uses patient satisfaction data be constructed? Who among the various classes of hospital employees should be included? The purposes of the study were to: (1) Describe how US hospitals consider patient satisfaction data in rewarding and providing incentives for employees as part of their overall quality improvement efforts; and (2) Show how the use of such reward/incentive programs with various categories of employees relates to patient satisfaction.

#### Methods:

A retrospective database analysis of patient satisfaction data from hospitals that use such data as part of their employee rewards and incentives plan. Satisfaction scores from inpatients of US hospitals in 2002 were partitioned into subsets representing classes of employees included in recognition programs. The subsets were composed of various combinations of the following: executive staff, managers, other staff. The designation of staff included in incentive programs was indicated by an official of each hospital. Patients rated satisfaction with aspects of their hospital stays such as the admissions process, room accommodations, meals, medical care from physicians and nurses, etc. The rating scale used for this purpose had been validated previously, and showed reliability of  $\alpha = .98$ .

#### Results:

One third of hospitals for which data were available used patient satisfaction scores as part of their incentive plan for employees. Of those, 45% (Group 1) used them for all categories of employees (executives, managers, and other staff); the remaining 55% (Group 2) restricted their use to only one or two of the three employee categories. When the two groups were compared, item differences displayed in Table 1 emerged.

Table 1: When all employee categories are included in reward/incentive plan, item scores increase

Item	Survey Section	Diff: All employee types vs. not all	Diff: All employee types vs. national norm
Pleasantness of room décor	Room	1.26	.69
Room cleanliness	Room	1.52	1.25
Room temperature	Room	1.27	0.70
Noise level in and around room	Room	1.44	1.77
How well things in room worked	Room	1.13	0.69
Information given to your family	Visitors/Family	1.63	0.68
Staff sensitivity to inconvenience	Personal Issues	1.61	0.86
Staff address emotional/spiritual needs	Personal Issues	1.28	0.79

**Conclusions:**

Hospitals that use patient satisfaction data as part of their reward/incentive plan for employees are better served to include all categories of employees in their plan, rather than restricting it. The project achieved its objectives of describing the implications of the use of patient satisfaction data in programs for employee rewards or incentives. It appears that those hospitals that reward all categories of employees succeed in fostering a more patient-centered culture than those that do not.