

How patients choose and how providers respond

Anna Dixon, King's Fund

John Appleby, King's Fund

Janet Askham, Picker Institute Europe

Peter Burge, RAND Europe

Nancy Devlin, City University



Research questions

- Will patient choice have an impact on the quality of services?
- What factors are important to patients when choosing between providers in practice?
- How do patients experience choice and what support are they given to exercise choice?
- What is the response of providers to patient choice?

Factors driving choice

- Survey of patients referred by GP for specialist consultation [n=4000]
- Survey design informed by exploratory interviews with patients [n=15] and cognitively tested [n=30]
- Revealed and stated preferences
- Data on choice set available to patient at time of booking (e.g. NHS Choices, Healthcare Commission, patient opinion websites, local media, marketing information)
- Discrete choice modelling

Experience of choice and support

- Survey (as above) plus review questions from national choice surveys for inclusion
- Sub sample of patient respondents interviewed to validate findings [n=20]
- Semi structured telephone interviews with GPs [n=20-30]
- Experience of being offered/ offering choice, information used (if any), support or advice received/ given
- Analysis of variance by SES, gender, age, practice characteristics, condition, ethnicity, region, etc.

Providers response

- Semi structured interviews with senior management of providers (FD, CEO, MD) at T_1 and T_2
- Impact of patient choice on business plans and strategy, understanding of demand drivers, response to market dynamics
- Relative importance of other factors, views on public comparative quality information

Site selection

- 4 local health economies
 - Competition between providers: concentration index, potential for choice, or spatial mapping
 - Penetration of patient choice: recall offer of choice, Choose and Book implementation,
- Exclusions: 18 week wait demos, Scottish/ Welsh borders
- Other factors: ISTCs/ private hospital treating NHS patients, referral management centre, GPSIs, rural/ urban, population variation
- All inbound referrals, outbound (if possible) consecutive patients or in tracer specialties?

Measures

- Revealed and stated preferences
 - estimated utility functions
 - observed place of choice (incl. local)/ referral decision
 - patterns of demand
- Equity of opportunity to choose/ decision quality
 - offered choice
 - supported or informed choice
 - exercised choice in line with preference
 - shared or autonomous decision

Measures cont.

- Changes in provider behaviour
 - Quality change
 - Responsiveness/ patient orientation
 - Gaming/ selection
 - Marketing/ PR
 - Market niches, business development
 - Sensitivity to changes in demand