

The Good Food Project: Measuring the patient hospital food experience with the Patient Hospital Food Experience Questionnaire

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Objective: The purpose of this study was three fold: first, to pilot a survey tool to measure patient expectations of and satisfaction with hospital food; second, to determine if there is an association between satisfaction and intake; and, third, to identify areas that could benefit from quality improvement initiatives.

Methods: The Patient Hospital Food Experience Questionnaire (PHFEQ) was used with permission and administered at two acute care hospitals in Regina, SK over a period of six weeks. Dietary intake data were also measured using an adapted version of My Meal Intake Tool. Patients were eligible to participate if they were medically and cognitively able, >18 years of age, spoke English and were consuming an oral diet for minimum two days. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ to determine if there was an association between satisfaction and intake.

Results: The PHFEQ (n=145) was administered for meals during the days of the week and took an average of 12.1 minutes to complete. Patients expect hospital food to be tasty, healthy and fresh. Forty-eight percent (n=66/138) of participants rated the overall quality of their meal as good, indicating they were satisfied. Patients consumed a mean intake of 67.1% of calories (n=144). Patient satisfaction of all attributes of the meal assessed was positively correlated with intake ($p < 0.05$). Specific areas to improve on within food services were identified.

Conclusion: The PHFEQ established patients' expectations of and satisfaction with hospital food and can be used to identify specific areas for food quality improvements within hospital food services. Ongoing use of this tool is recommended so food service personnel can continue to assess patient satisfaction with their menu and food quality, evaluate the impact of quality improvement efforts and ultimately help provide the good food patients need for health, well-being, healing and prevention of hospital-related malnutrition.

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