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While the intent of the survey is good, feedback I've received indicates that the survey is much TOO LONG. Some hospitals also use an additional survey tool in conjunction with HCAHPS, and patients feel the questions are redundant, and again, too long (I've seen one version that's 6 (SIX) pages long)! Patients also dislike the question about race/ethnicity.

The HCAHPS Survey questions should start with the most recent visit first, then ask about the last 12 months, for example. Also, if someone is seeing a specialist (most often for the first/only time), many of the questions do not apply.

CMS/DCAPP Response

May 18, 2015

Thank you for your comments on the HCAHPS Survey. Bearing in mind the burden on patients, CMS has endeavored to keep the HCAHPS Survey brief and compact while gathering key critical information about patient experience of hospital care. On average, the 32-item survey takes 8 minutes to complete.

To allow hospitals to undertake their own quality improvement efforts, the HCAHPS Survey permits the inclusion of a reasonable number of supplemental questions following the core HCAHPS items in accordance with the guidelines published in the HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines manual; see pp. 77; 88-89; 103; and 122-123 in HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines, V10.0, <http://www.hcahponline.org/qaguidelines.aspx#V90>.

While the number of supplemental questions is left to the discretion of the hospital, the maximum number of such items must be reported in the Administration Data section for each survey. CMS plans to more closely examine the possible effect of supplemental items on survey completion and response rates in the upcoming mode experiment.

While CMS is aware of patient sensitivity toward the race and ethnicity items on the HCAHPS Survey, we are required by government mandate to include these specific questions and response categories. These items are used for

the production of congressionally-mandated reports on healthcare disparities.

To improve timeliness and patient recall, the HCAHPS Survey specifically targets only a recent inpatient hospital stay, the date of which is noted in the survey cover letter or in the introduction to the telephone or IVR survey. The HCAHPS Survey does not inquire about other hospital stays, nor does it ask about particular physicians, such as specialists.