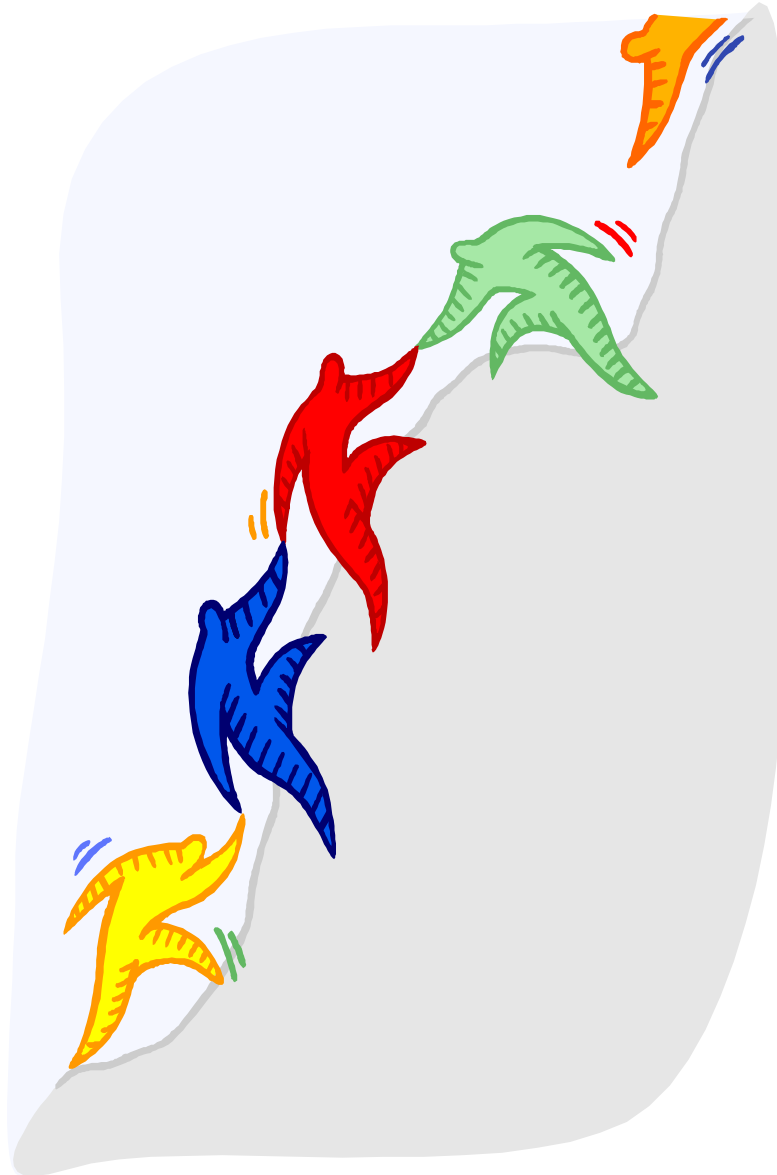


Carnoustie Medical Group



Assessment of Patient Satisfaction GP Triage

July 2009

Background

Eight partners, two registrars, practice administrative and nursing teams form Carnoustie Medical Group and work from a purpose built primary care centre situated in the west end of Carnoustie.

It is as a Group that most decisions are made about providing health care for our patients in Carnoustie and the surrounding area. The general practitioners of Carnoustie Medical Group are responsible for delivering care to some 12670 patients, a number set to increase as Carnoustie continues its planned expansion.

In December 2008 the practice introduced GP triage of all patient/carer requests for a home visit or who felt they needed seen by a doctor the same day. This development was undertaken as GPs agreed that getting an appointment on the day for most patients was on a first come first served basis – want not need. Also, if there were no bookable appointments left on the day, then surgeries were expanded on a need only basis assessed by the oncall doctor.

Method

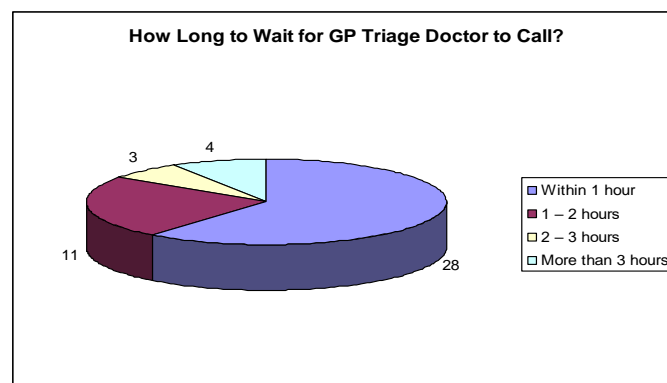
The practice recognises the importance of patient surveys for user input to improving/developing methods of care delivery and practice management systems and services therefore it is within this environment that we invited one hundred patients to complete a patient satisfaction questionnaire (Appendix I) relating to a recent contact with our GP Triage system. We included a stamped addressed envelope along with the questionnaire to encourage completion.

This survey was sent out on 8 and 9 July 2009, every 6th patient contact from the previous week being selected until 100 patients identified. The questionnaire was anonymous with no identifying connection to the patient list.

Results

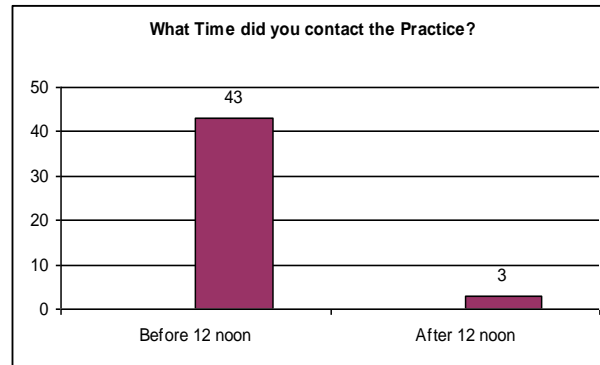
The following results are based on a return of 46 fully completed questionnaires from the original distribution of 100, returned within one month of the survey period. This gave the practice a 46% response rate, which was disappointing.

Qu1a- How long did you wait for your call back from the Triage Doctor?



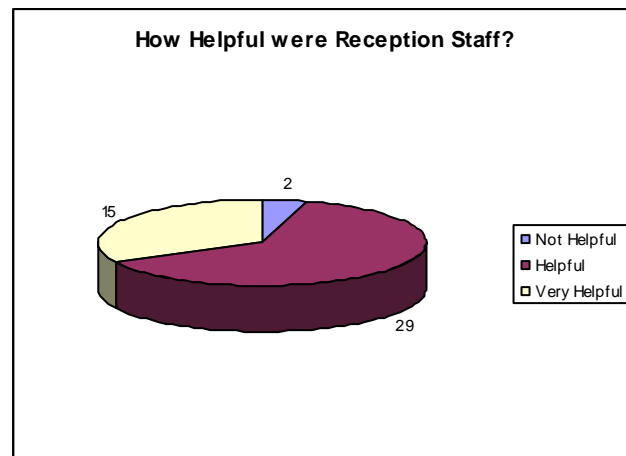
61% of the respondents were contacted within one hour. Of the patients who waited more than two hours for a call back from the Triage doctor, the majority happened to be requiring assessment on a busy Monday morning.

Qu1b – What time of day did you contact the practice?



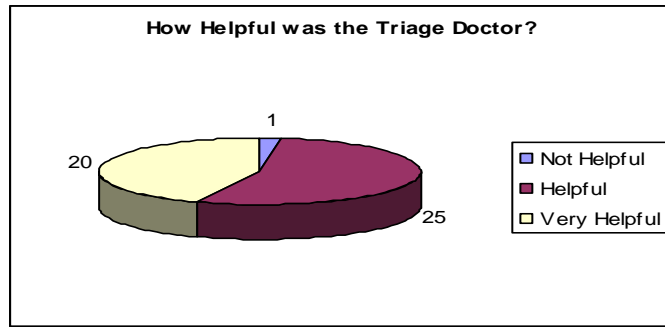
93% of patients contacted the practice before 12 noon. This is to be expected as for many years patients understood they had to phone at 8am to get an appointment on the day.

Qu2 – How Helpful were Reception Staff when your first phoned?



96% of the respondents thought that the way they were treated by the reception team was helpful or very helpful. We would wish to see no patient feel they were not given good service from our staff and will strive towards that end, but we do realise we are not able to please all our patients all of the time.

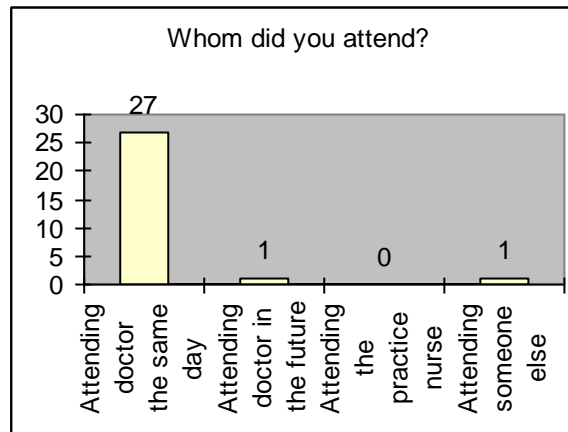
Qu3- How Helpful was the Triage Doctor in dealing with your problem?



98% of the respondents thought that the Triage doctor was helpful or very helpful in dealing with their problem. Again, we strive to give all patients the best of service but sometimes that does mean saying no, and this will affect how the patient views that service.

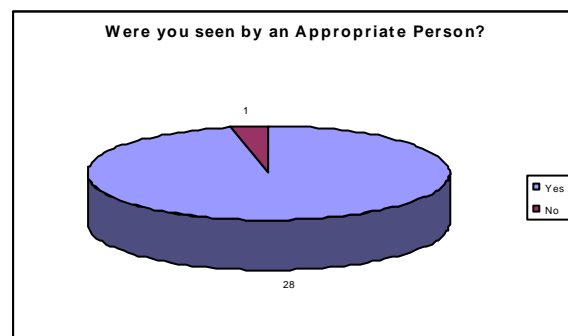
Qu4 – Was your problem dealt with:

a) By coming to the surgery?



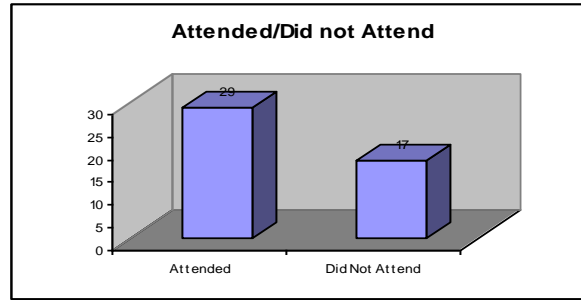
29 patients (63% of respondents) were seen by a healthcare professional, 27 (59% of respondents) of whom were seen by a doctor the same day as request.

b) Did you feel you were seen by an appropriate member of the practice?



Of the 29 respondents seen by a healthcare professional, only one patient felt they were not seen appropriately. On asking the patient why not, they stated: doctor gave wrong dose of medicine (not enough).

c) Without coming to the surgery?



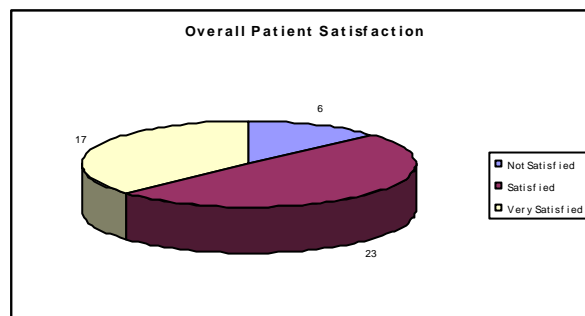
17 patients (37% of respondents) had their problem dealt with by telephone.

d) Did you require to contact the practice again regarding the same problem?

11 (26%) patients responded yes and when asked to provide a reason for the contact, this was their response:

- 1 Getting result of specimen
- 2 Wrong diagnosis
- 3 Different antibiotics given as symptoms did not clear
- 4 Doctor rang me at later date, confirmed sample left by me at reception
- 5 Although was seen same day by doctor, had to return - gallbladder problems
- 6 Although was seen same day by doctor, called 999 as child's temperature would not stabilise
- 7 Change of prescription
- 8 Took long time for problem to be sorted
- 9 I had to contact the surgery x 3 in 24hrs as the info was not passed on from reception to the nurses
- 10 Eventually came in to the surgery after two prescriptions over the phone - both docs good when seen - not impressed by phone diagnosis - eye infection which did not clear up
- 11 Although seen the same day by a doctor, contacted surgery again as could not get an appointment

Qu5 - Overall, how satisfied do you feel with your experience?



87% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall experience of the GP Triage system. This implies that there is still work to do in order to increase patient acceptance and satisfaction with this method of filtration.

Patients were also asked to provide suggestions for improvement of the GP Triage system experience and the responses received are attached (Appendix II).

Conclusion

The majority of those patients who returned their questionnaires were happy with the process and outcome of their contact with the practice. However, the practice was disappointed at the level of return given the perception that patients were very unhappy with this change in method of access in an acute situation.

There was a high degree of satisfaction with the way patients were dealt with by both reception staff and the doctors undertaking triage assessment and the practice will strive to improve the patient experience.

By reducing the acute appointments needed by 37% and knowing the patients who did attend were requiring to do so, allows more routine appointments to be made available which patients can access in the normal way, through our reception staff.

It is difficult to say, reviewing the repeat contact reasons, for all but two cases, whether there would be no repeat contacts with the practice, if they had been seen by a doctor without being triaged.

Although this new system was communicated to patients by practice newsletter (Autumn 2008), practice leaflet and via our Patient Information Screen in the Waiting Area, there is still a requirement for a public relations exercise to increase patient acceptance and understanding of why there is a need for this process.

Recommendations

1. Discuss the results of this questionnaire with (a) the partners of the practice and (b) the reception team and (c) the Patient Participation Group taking forward any actions presented from these discussions and agreed by the practice management team.
2. Develop a patient information leaflet explaining both the acute and routine appointment process, reviewing with the Patient Participation Group prior to distribution to patients.
3. Produce an article for the Guide and Gazette highlighting the benefits and advantages of this system of access for acute care.
4. The Business Manager to re-assess patient satisfaction in February 2010.

GP Triage of Patient Request for Home Visit or Same Day Appointments

Assessment of Patient Experience, July 2009

Suggestions for Improvement from Patients Questioned

Get rid of this system, can't get by people on phone.

To be informed by doctor or reception about specimen giving and at health centre itself. Not made clear - know now.

No problems here, all fine, handled well

When concerning a child, call back should be within the hour, thank you

To see doctor when phoning for an appointment (this patient was seen the same day by doctor!)

Get better qualified doctors

Would rather have seen the doctor at the health centre that day

See patients that rarely attend - they are not time wasters

Appointments in evening should be kept for those who work as difficult to get time off work for same day appointments

Staff very professional but with very little empathy

Feel triage not appropriate when you know you want to be seen that day (there is a difference between emergency and patient concern - feel the time doctor spends on phone could be used by providing clinic appointments)

I have contacted the surgery on numerous occasions since 1 December 2008 and my problem dealt with differently on each occasion

Chain of information from reception to nurses/doctors could be vastly improved and call back system requires looking into – despite this one occasion which I am dissatisfied with, I cannot fault the practice overall on previous occasions

It took several phone calls to eventually be seen by doc although I was given advice and two prescriptions by phone and I wonder if I would have been seen initially whether they eye problem would have dragged on so long - it may have done as I had hay fever as well

Try to change the same day appointments

Receptionists could be more helpful

Jean King August 2009

No, you're all doing a grand job! Thank You

One patient stated that there was no answer when they phoned several times during the day. Finally asked the chemist to contact the practice and was sorted out then. Not satisfied with this lack of service. (? Patient contacting the correct phone number)

Call back from triage doctor within the hour of phoning – this comment made twice