

Project to Standardize Dental Care Plan Quality Data: Adult Patients' Report

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1



Introduction

Goal of dental care: to improve the health and meet the functional needs of patients.

Can we measure whether care is good? There is currently no standard, non-proprietary method for providing national benchmarks of dental care quality based on patient reports.

Why not? It's difficult to create a survey that covers all topics important to various stakeholders while being short enough for practical use.



2



Project Goal

To apply a rigorous program of qualitative research to develop a content-valid, concise, yet comprehensive tool to provide data on quality of dental care from the patient point of view using the CAHPS® approach.



3



Overview of the Development of a Dental Care CAHPS Survey

- Review of clinical literature
- Meetings with dental care experts
- Focus groups with dental patients
- Development of draft survey
- Cognitive testing of draft survey
- Final survey design



4



Literature Review

- Definition of dental patient experiences
- Definition of satisfaction with care
- Identification of domains
- Measurement of identified domains
- Review of existing surveys
- Review of reports and articles on existing CAHPS surveys



5



Dental Care Quality (DCQ) Domains Identified in Literature Review

- Dental plan administration
- Access
- Delivery of care
- Overall ratings
- Behavioral intentions



6



Dental Care Expert Meetings

■ Participants included:

- Experts in dental care policy
- Respected members of dental community
- Dental care authorities in TMA
- Representatives from TRICARE dental care contractors

■ Lessons Learned:

- Most important domains: access to care and quality of care
- Focus of QI efforts at the plan and clinic levels
- Identify variations in care among beneficiary subgroups
- Compare quality of care for TMA beneficiaries to civilian sector
- Disagreement over survey operations issues (e.g., mode, frequency, period of time measured, length of survey)
- Make the data useful – provide information that stakeholders need to know



7



Focus Group with Consumers

- 12 focus groups, 72 total participants
 - 5 groups in Monterey, CA
 - 7 groups in North Carolina (Fayetteville, Jacksonville)
- Most participants rated their own dentist as great, excellent, or good, but rated their plan as average
- Participants rated several items related to dental care as **most important**:
 - Whether the dentist fixes my problems
 - How clean the dentist's equipment or tools are
 - Overall quality of care delivered by the dentist
 - Whether a dentist's equipment is in good working order
 - How quickly I can see a dentist in an emergency
- Participants rated 2 items as **least important**:
 - How nervous the treatment makes me
 - Whether my plan covers cosmetic dentistry



8



Dental CAHPS Survey Design Steps

- Draft survey based on literature review, leadership meetings, and focus groups
- Apply CAHPS consortium requirements to survey content
 - Focus on reports of “whether” and “how frequently” something occurs rather than ratings of “excellent-to-poor” or “dissatisfied-to-satisfied” since such reports are more actionable and less subject to the emotional state of respondent)
- Streamline draft survey
- Cognitively test survey
- Revise and finalize survey



9



Survey Development – Streamlining the Instrument

- Initial draft survey contained 139 items
- Restricted survey content to 7 most-mentioned aspects of dental care in 4 domains:
 - Whether dentist fixes problem (outcome)
 - Overall quality of care (quality)
 - How quickly can see dentist for emergency care (access)
 - Whether plan covers things that need to be done (access)
 - Out-of-pocket costs (access)
 - Ease of finding a new dentist (access)
 - Cleanliness of office, equipment, and tools (cleanliness)
- Reduced survey to 61 items for cognitive testing



10



Cognitive Testing: Process and Draft Survey

- Process of cognitive testing:
 - Based on a model of question response process: comprehension, retrieval, judgment formation, and response production.
 - Participants verbalize their thoughts as they respond to survey questions.
 - Scripted, probing, follow-up questions are asked to gain additional information.
 - Interviewer writes up notes, notes are analyzed and used to question and response scale revisions.
- Cognitive testing of draft survey:
 - Conducted 2 rounds of testing with 8 participants each
 - Respondents were enrollees of TRICARE dental programs
 - After first round, revised survey, and conducted second round of tests



11



Final Surveys

- Final Version of Instrument Consisted of 50 Items
 - 3 Eligibility Items,
 - 14 'About You' Items,
 - 33 Substantive Items
- Separate Surveys
 - TRICARE Dental Program (TDP)
 - TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP)
 - TRDP Version Has 3 Fewer 'About You' Items



12



Next Steps

- The two surveys will be field tested in March – May, 2006
- Pilot data to be collected on ~2,100 TDP and ~2,100 TRDP enrollees
- Psychometric evaluation of construct validity and reliability of scale scores
- Study methods and results will be disseminated in peer-reviewed literature and presented at conferences



13

