THE BRITISH SCIENCE FESTIVAL NEWCASTLE 7 - 12 SEPT 2013

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Beware - health care!

Should patients look after their own safety when in hospital?

What do YOU think?

Saturday 7th September 2013.

Richard Thomson & Susan Hrisos

As many as one in 10 patients may be harmed by hospital care. Despite an emphasis on patient safety over recent years, this remains a significant problem. One possible approach is to engage patients in improving their own safety, but this is highly contested. We wanted to hear what the public and healthcare professionals had to say about this, so as part of the 2013 British Science Festival we held a public debate. Our event was a 'sell-out' and brought together an audience of academics, social and health policy commentators, patient and patient organisations, and the public, to debate and discuss the role of people in improving their own safety in health care. A series of presentations that provided insight on the debate question, from the perspectives of policymakers, researchers, frontline clinicians and patients, was followed by a chaired, open floor question and answer session with an expert panel. The panel included the session presenters (see below), Annie Laverty, *Director of Patient Experience, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust* and Lesley Kay, *Consultant Rheumatologist & a Clinical Director for Patient Safety and Quality at Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.* To maximise interactivity and participation in the debate we asked our audience a brief set of questions at the beginning of the session that they could respond to using an electronic voting button.

 Debate chair: Richard Thomson, *Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health; Associate Dean for Patient & Public Engagement*
Presenters:
Frances Healey, *Associate Director of Patient Safety, NHS England (NHSE)*
Vikki Entwistle, *Professor of Health Services Research & Ethics, University of Aberdeen*
Susan Hrisos, *Senior Research Associate, Newcastle University (with a video contribution from Professor Rebecca Lawton, University of Leeds)*
Angela Brown, *Trustee, Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA)*
Dave Green, *Public & Patient Involvement volunteer*

With video contributions offering:

Clinical & policy support
Tony Avery, *Prof of Primary Healthcare, Nottingham University*
Nick Barber, *Prof of Pharmacy & Director of Research, Health Foundation*
David Cousins, *Prof of Pharmacy & Head of Safe Medication Practice, NHSE*

Frontline medical perspective
Rebecca Say, *Registrar in Obstetrics & Gynaecology*
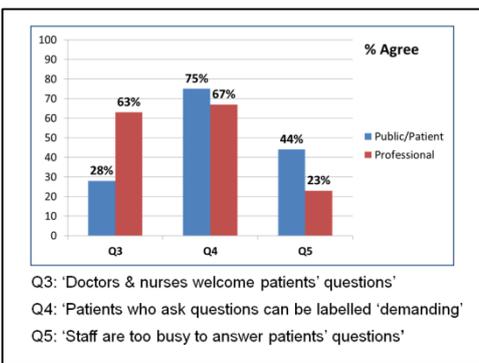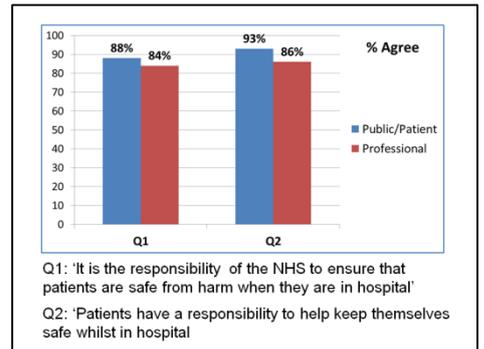**David Hamilton,** *ENT Surgical Registrar*

Perspective of professionals as patients & relatives
Suzette Woodward, *Director of Safety, NHS Litigation Authority*
Marie Batey, *Senior nurse, Acute & Older People, NHSE*
Mike Surkitt-Parr, *Associate Director of Patient Safety, NHSE*
Nima Vekaria, *Intelligence Support Manager, NHSE.*

What our audience said …

Sixty percent of our audience described themselves as 'patient/public' and 40% as 'healthcare professionals'.

There was general consensus that patients have a responsibility to help keep themselves safe whilst in hospital, <u>BUT</u> also that the ultimate responsibility for patient safety lay firmly with the NHS (Q1 & Q2).

Q1: 'It is the responsibility of the NHS to ensure that patients are safe from harm when they are in hospital'
Q2: 'Patients have a responsibility to help keep themselves safe whilst in hospital

Q3: 'Doctors & nurses welcome patients' questions'
Q4: 'Patients who ask questions can be labelled 'demanding''
Q5: 'Staff are too busy to answer patients' questions'

However, voting also demonstrated an interesting divide in perceptions of staff receptiveness to such patient involvement (Q3), and a shared insight about potential negative consequences (Q4).   Q5 further highlights why patients hesitate to ask questions about their care and safety.

These findings reiterate the vital role of staff in 'permitting' patient involvement in their healthcare that was highlighted by local research looking at how best to support a patient role.
(Hrisos & Thomson, PLoS One 2013, 8(11), e80759)

Why patients don't contribute to their own safety

The view from the front line

Dave Green