

News release

Major programme to transform patients' experience of care launched with new research and announcement of pilot sites

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A major programme to transform patients' experience of care in hospital is launched today by The King's Fund. It kicks off with publication of a report assessing the scale and nature of the problems patients experience and looks at why staff don't always provide the sort of care they would want for themselves and their own families. Today also sees the announcement of the first hospitals which will be piloting new ways of improving care over the next three years.

The first report from The Point of Care programme concludes that while patient surveys show high levels of satisfaction, more detailed studies, and stories from patients themselves, indicate a much patchier picture. The report identifies a number of problems, including variations in the quality of care and the need for staff to see the person in the patient.

The Point of Care programme found there was a lack of evidence to support many of the methods now being used to improve services, which often focused on just one group of staff or one aspect of patient experience. According to the report, current efforts do not do enough to transform hospital culture or to support staff to provide compassionate care. It recommends that action be taken at four levels : the individual staff member; the team, unit or department; the institution as a whole, and the wider health care system.

The Director of The King's Fund Point of Care programme Dr Jocelyn Cornwell said: 'Staff come to work intending to provide the quality of care they would want for themselves and their families. But today's hospitals are vast, time is at a premium and in these busy 'medical factories' care of the person can unfortunately get squeezed out. The Point of Care programme aims to help staff and hospital boards improve patients' experience of care and support staff to see the person in the patient.'

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The research identified two practical initiatives to promote compassion in care and improve patients' experience that have been shown to work and offer real potential to create sustainable change in English hospitals:

- Schwartz Center Rounds®, developed by the Kenneth B. Schwartz Center in the USA, provide a monthly one-hour session for staff from all disciplines in a hospital to come together and discuss difficult emotional and social issues arising from patient care. The Rounds will be piloted at the Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust from early 2009 and other trusts in England from mid 2009.
- Experience Based Design involves patients and staff working together to improve the experience - or feel - of using services, drawing on ideas from design in which users are a central part of the process. Patients and staff are partners in the process, strengthening the link between them. The Point of Care programme will be piloting Experience Based Design with the Integrated Cancer Centre at Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust over the next three years.

Launching the programme Niall Dickson, Chief Executive of The Kings' Fund, said: 'Most of us know from our own experience that while care is often fantastic, it is sometimes impersonal and lacks compassion. Yet how we are treated can affect how we recover and for a hospital there is scarcely anything more important than ensuring that every patient is treated with kindness and consideration - not as a collection of symptoms but as an individual with anxieties, feelings and views.'

"Lord Darzi's recent review of the NHS in England was designed to put quality at the heart of health care - if that ambition is to be realised understanding and measuring what patients experience will be vital. We know good care can aid recovery and that good leadership can create a culture which brings that about. Working with patients, their families, staff and the leadership within hospitals we hope that The Point of Care programme will help to transform what it is like to be cared for in hospital."

Professor Arnie Purushotham, Director of the Integrated Cancer Centre at Guy's and St Thomas', King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trusts and King's College London said: "We're delighted to be piloting Experienced Based Design as it fits with the Integrated Cancer Centre's vision to provide the very best cancer services to patients. The project, which will initially focus on breast and lung cancer, will help ensure that our patients and staff are working together to identify areas for improvement and to develop the highest quality services around patients' needs."

The Point of Care programme will produce a series of expert seminars and papers in 2009 examining important aspects of improving patients' experience, such as 'can we teach compassion?'. It will also offer a wide range of resources for anyone interested in patients'

experience of care. The King's Fund hopes to increase the number of trials and pilot sites over the next 18 months to two years, enabling the development of rigorously tested and evaluated methods that can be widely used by hospitals.

Notes to Editors

1. For more information about The Point of Care programme, Schwartz Center Rounds® or Experience Based Design, or for interviews please contact The King's Fund press office on 020 7307 2585, 020 7307 2603 or 020 7307 2581. An ISDN line is available for interviews on 020 7637 0185.

2. The King's Fund seeks to understand how the health system in England can be improved. Using that insight, we help to shape policy, transform services and bring about behaviour change. Our work includes research, analysis, leadership development and service improvement. We also offer a wide range of resources to help everyone working in health to share knowledge, learning and ideas.

3. The Point of Care programme uses the Institute of Medicine's definition of the six dimensions of patient-centred care:

- Compassion, empathy and responsiveness to needs, values and expressed preferences
- Co-ordination and integration
- Information, communication and education
- Physical comfort
- Emotional support, relieving fear and anxiety
- Involvement of family and friends

4. The Point of Care programme is interested in hearing from individuals and organisations who share the interest in improving patients' experience and supporting staff to give care that sees the person in the patient. To sign up for updates and get involved in the programme, go to www.kingsfund.org.uk/pointofcare.