

Mystery Shoppers – A quality review process in radiology

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Introduction

The national Friends and Family Test (FFT), launched in 2013, is an important feedback tool that supports the fundamental principle that people who use NHS services should have the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience. However, outside of the FFT, quality assessment tools within radiology often centre around the clinical aspect of the patient pathway rather than evaluate the patients experience of the whole journey from referral to examination.

The use of mystery shoppers in the retail sector is widely embraced to assess quality of the customer experience. The same process can be mirrored within radiology to review the quality of the service provided.

The idea of using mystery shoppers in radiology was utilised by the radiology accreditation team at Derriford Hospital, Plymouth as a means of quality testing the patient pathway. The process was then introduced within ultrasound at the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust. The radiology process from receiving the appointment letter through to being greeted into the examination room by the radiographer or radiologist is reviewed using this process.



The only **Mystery Shopper** you really need is your Customer



The Mystery Shopper Concept

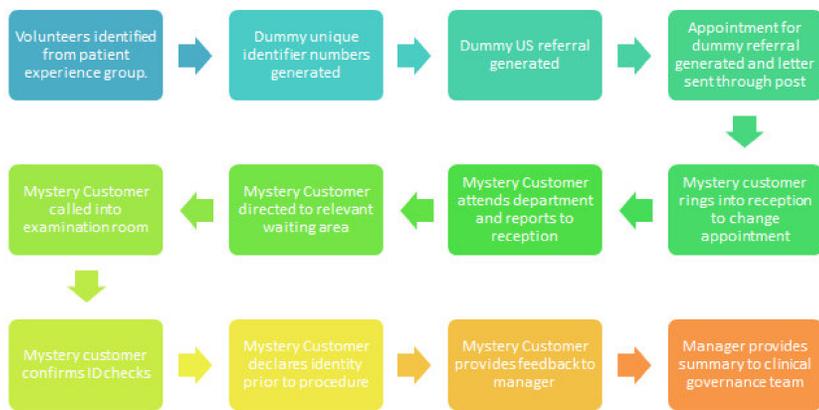
Mystery shopping was standard practice by the early 1940s as a way to measure employee integrity. Tools used for mystery shopping assessments range from simple questionnaires to complete audio and video recordings.

In June 2008, the American Medical Association's Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs released a recommendation on the use of "secret shopper patients". The Recommendation states: "Physicians have an ethical responsibility to engage in activities that contribute to continual improvements in patient care. One method for promoting such quality improvement is through the use of secret shopper 'patients' who have been appropriately trained to provide feedback about physician performance in the clinical setting."^[1]

Since 2010, mystery shopping has become abundant in the medical tourism industry, with healthcare providers and medical facilities using the tool to assess and improve the customer service experience.^[2, 3]



Mystery Customer Audit Process



Why use Mystery Shoppers?

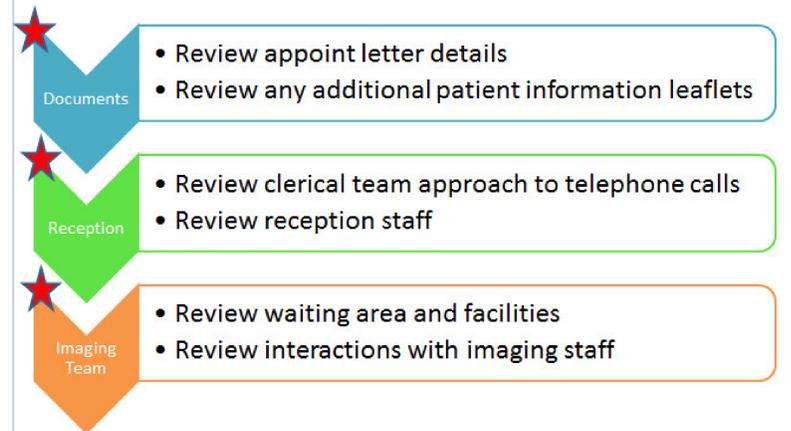
Mystery shopping feedback can be used as the basis for Continuous Improvement Programmes and staff performance management – the process will not only identify what needs fixing, but will dictate and provide evidence for a programme which will support changing staff behaviour and help correct the issues highlighted

This process provides an accurate picture of the patient experience. Continual monitoring will ensure patient satisfaction is at the highest possible level.

Knowing, from an impartial point of view, that your patients are happy and receiving the best service from the staff team is something that is immensely valuable to ensure the service succeeds.



Mystery Shopper Reviews



Outcomes

Positive facts identified

- Clear documentation
- Clear instructions
- Helpful clerical team
- Friendly reception staff
- Friendly Radiographers

Negative Facts Identified

- Poor signage
- Issues with cleanliness of waiting areas
- Dummy ID's are a hindrance
- Repeated utilisation of same mystery shopper potentially skewed results

Conclusion

Utilising Mystery Shoppers gives an holistic review of your service beyond the examination and report. Service user feedback gives an honest and impartial review of the environment our patients access on a daily basis. Learn from the issues identified and improve the shopper experience for both your patients and staff



Pitfalls

To comply with local Trust information Governance the mystery shoppers at Hull had to have "dummy" patient ID's generated so that there were no identifiable parameters that could relate to the volunteer. This resulted in the names, dates of birth, and in one case the gender, of the "dummy" patient being completely at odds with our volunteers. The dummy ID was easily recognisable on the radiology information system and therefore staff were not blinded to the review.

The feedback related to the documentation and non-face to face contact was helpful but the assessment of the staff interactions was limited by the ID issue.

A limiting factor in the Plymouth Trust was that the repeated use of the same mystery shopper resulted in the risk of her being identified on sight by some of the radiology staff, this is a further potential source of bias.

Resources

Mystery Shopper questionnaires used by both trusts are available on the BMUS website. Visit bmus.org for details

1. The AMA promotes the art and science of medicine and the betterment of public health. <https://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/38/a08ceioreports.pdf> accessed 20.10.17
2. Mystery shopping new trend in Medical Tourism, Novasans Archived June 17, 2015
3. "Secret Shopper Patients". [www.ama-assn.org. https://www.ama-assn.org/about-us/council-ethical-judicial-affairs-ceja-reports](http://www.ama-assn.org/about-us/council-ethical-judicial-affairs-ceja-reports)



Mystery Customers – A quality review process in radiology

Name.....

Date:	Examination :	Site:	
Date appointment letter received:			
Was the appointment time clear on the letter?	Yes	No	
Was the content of the letter clear?	Yes	No	
Did you understand the preparation information you required (if any?)	Yes	No	
Did you need to contact radiology to change your appointment?	Yes	No	
Was the information on how to do this clear?	Yes	No	N/A
If you had to change your appointment how long did it take you to get through to booking team?	Attempts to call:	N/A	
	Time:		
If you had to speak to the booking team please comment on their attitude, helpfulness and communication with you overall			
Please add any additional comments regarding the letter and booking process			

Reception:		
Was the reception area easy to find?	Yes	No
Were you happy with the signage for the department within the hospital?	Yes	No
Were you greeted appropriately by the receptionist?	Yes	No
Please add any comments about finding the department the reception process		
Waiting area		
What time did you arrive?		
Were you seen on your appointment time?	Yes	No
If NO: How long were you waiting from reception to being called in to the examination room?		
Were there appropriate chairs and facilities within the waiting area?	Yes	No
If you had to use the WC facilities were they clean and appropriate?	Yes	No
Please add any comments about the waiting time and / or waiting room and facilities used		

Pre Examination:			
Did you have to complete any pre-examination safety checks or consent forms?	Yes	No	
If so, were the instructions clear?	Yes	No	N/A
Was the document easy to complete?	Yes	No	N/A
If you completed the documents with a member of staff were you happy with the process?	Yes	No	N/A
Please add any comments about the safety check process and any communication you had with members of staff			

Changing Room:			
Did you have to get changed into a hospital gown prior to the examination?	Yes	No	
If so, were you happy with how a member of staff addressed you when they called you into the examination room?	Yes	No	N/A
If you received instructions were they clear?	Yes	No	N/A
Did you feel your dignity was maintained?	Yes	No	
Please add any comments about the changing procedure if applicable			

Examination:			
Were you happy with how the member of staff addressed you when they called you into the examination room?			
Did the member of staff introduce themselves?			
If other members of staff were present were they introduced?			
Did the member of staff explain what procedure was appropriately?			
If you received instructions were they clear?			
Please add any comments about the examination process and staff communication up to the point at which you declared yourself as a mystery customer			

<p>Thank you for taking the time and effort to evaluate our service. The feedback we receive is of enormous value and will be used to improve patient care in all aspects of our service. Please add any further comments below:</p>

Please return the form to: xxxxxx

Mystery Patient Feedback

Date.....

Contacting the GP's Booking Office:

How quickly was the phone answered?	
Was the booking clerk polite and helpful?	
Were you given clear instructions on where to attend?	
Comments:	

The Department:

What were your first impressions on:

Cleanliness	
Decoration	
Facilities	
Signage	

Reception:

Did you have to queue long at reception?	
Did the receptionist greet you appropriately and politely?	
Was the waiting room comfortable?	

Was the reading material available / appropriate?	
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Changing Facilities:

Were you greeted appropriately and politely by the X-Ray helper?	
Were clear instructions on changing given to you?	
Was the cubicle clean?	

The Examination:

Did you have to wait long between changing and being called for your examination?	
Did the radiographer introduce themselves?	
Did they greet you appropriately and politely?	
Did they explain what was required of you?	
Was the X-Ray room clean and tidy?	
Following the examination were you given information on when you may receive the results?	

General:

How long did the whole process take?	
Overall impressions and comments:	