

# Partnering with consumers to assess and improve satisfaction and understanding of medicine lists



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## Introduction

Patients of The Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) may be provided with a medicine list during their admission or on discharge. During 2017, the format of the medicine list was updated, the main difference being the addition of an 'Important Information' section which contains common and/or serious side effects and significant counselling points about some frequently dispensed medicines. This was based on patient feedback that more information about the side effects of medications would be desirable.

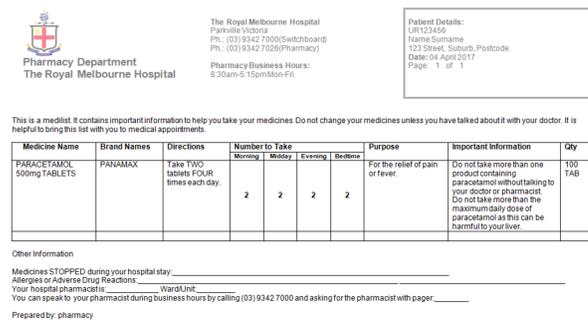


Figure 1: An example of the updated medicine list

## Aims

- To obtain consumer feedback on the updated medicine list
- To assess overall satisfaction with the medicine list
- To assess how well patients/carers understand the wording of the medicine list (i.e. words used, clarity, amount of information)
- To use this data to implement further change to the medicine list (if warranted)

## Methods

This project was conducted at The RMH City and Royal Park campuses. An anonymous survey was distributed to adult inpatients aged 18 or over or their carers who had a medicine list produced for them during the study week. This list had to include at least one medicine that had the section 'Important Information'.

Exclusion criteria:

- Unable to speak and/or read English
- Cognitive impairment
- Visual impairment resulting in an inability to read the medicine list
- If the person responsible for medicine management was not present when the list was issued

Each clinical pharmacist was given five survey packs to hand out during the study week. The patients or their carers who agreed to be involved in the study completed the survey at the hospital, placed it in an envelope and returned it to a staff member.

Basic demographic information was sought, then participants were asked to rate their satisfaction and understanding of the different sections of the medicine list using five point Likert Scales, with opportunities to add comments throughout. The eight components of the medicine list evaluated were: Introduction, Generic and Brand name sections, Directions and Dose/Timing, Purpose, Important Information, and Other Information.

## Results

A total of 46 participants completed the survey. The average number of medications on the medicine lists was eight (range 1 to 20). The average age of the patient was 59 years. Over 78% of respondents stated that their primary language was English and 82% had completed at least a high school level of education.

Section	% Positive (Strongly Agree or Agree)	% Negative (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral or Left Blank)
Introduction	97.8	2.2
Medicine Name	95.7	4.3
Directions	97.7	2.3
Number to Take	95.3	4.7
Purpose	97.7	2.2
Important Information	97.6	2.4
Other Information	95.3	4.6

Table 1: Participant-rated *understanding* of the sections of the medicine list

Section	% Positive (Strongly Agree or Agree)	% Negative (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral or Left Blank)
Introduction	95.7	4.3
Medicine Name	95.7	4.3
Brand Name	84.8	15.2
Directions	95.3	4.7
Number to Take	93.0	7.0
Purpose	97.7	2.3
Important Information	100.0	0.0
Other Information	97.7	2.3

Table 2: Participant-rated *satisfaction* with the sections of the medicine list

Overall, there was a positive response to all questions about understanding (96.7%) and satisfaction (95%). For each component of the medicine list evaluated, the majority strongly agreed that the section was useful and comprehensible.

Over 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there was the right amount of information in the 'Important Information' section.

The small numbers of negative responses meant that in depth analysis was not possible, but responses did not appear to vary based on age, level of education, language spoken at home or the number of medicines included on the list.

Most participant free-text comments were positive. Very few suggestions for further improvement were offered. One participant suggested that it may be confusing for patients if they do not see their current brand on the medicine list and another suggested that it would be beneficial to include pictures of the medications. We have noted these comments as desired future updates to our medicine lists.

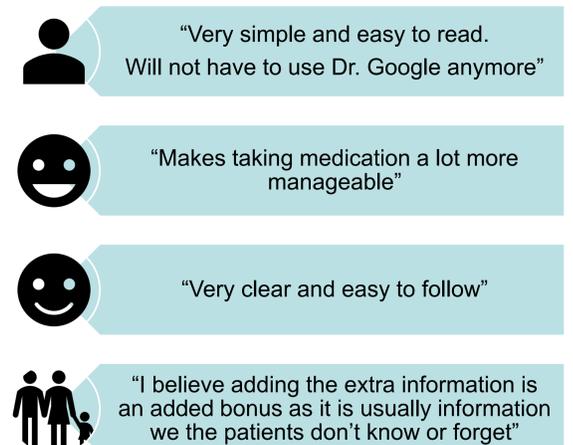


Figure 2: Some of the positive consumer comments received

## Conclusion

Almost all patients were satisfied with and understood all aspects of the medicine list provided. The patient feedback received supports continuation of the changes implemented, and expansion of the database of medicines with 'Important Information' included.

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the patients who participated in this study and the pharmacists who handed out the surveys.