

## In-house Survey on Appointment system

### Introduction

The practice produced a questionnaire to assess the continuity of care provided in the way of patients being able to see a GP of their choice and to highlight areas to improve the appointment system.

### Results

#### Frequency of Seeing Preferred GP

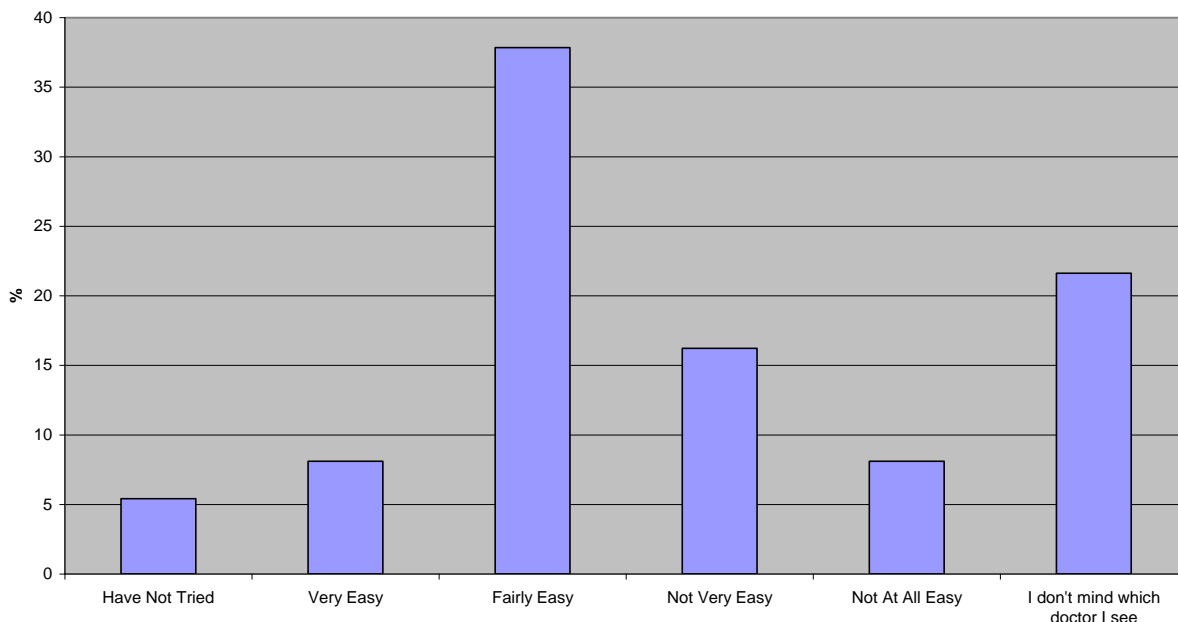


Figure 1. Bar chart showing percentage response to data collected from patients when asked 'How easy have you been able to see your preferred GP within the last 12 months?' Sample size = 37.

#### Reasons for making an Appointment

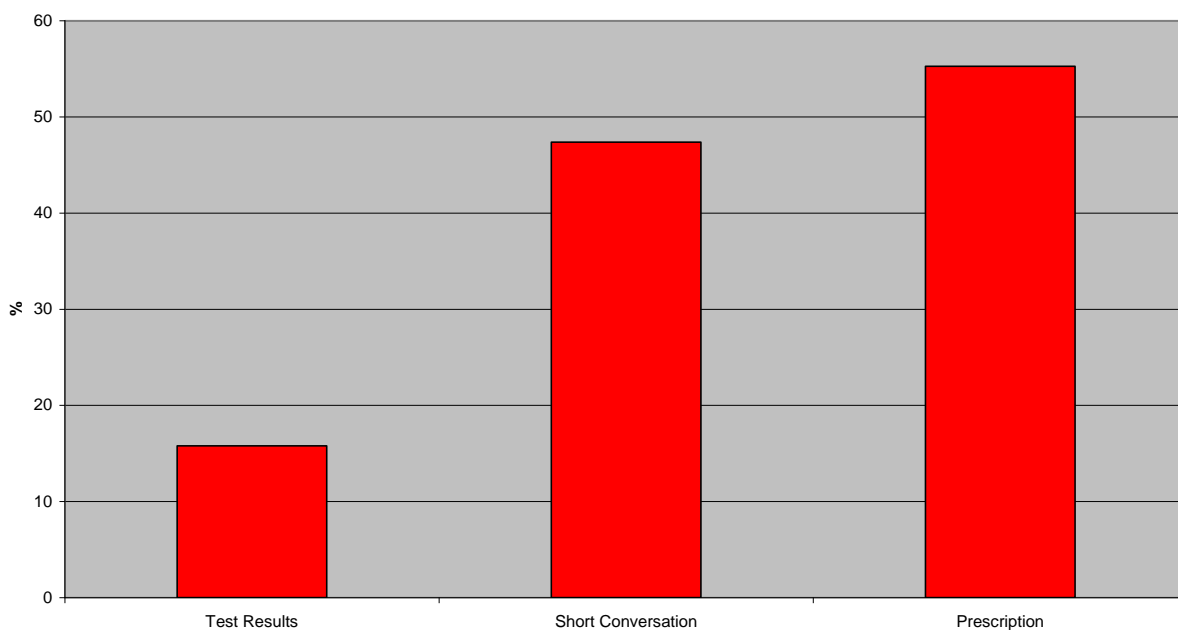


Figure 2. Bar chart showing percentage response to data collected from patients when asked 'Have you made an appointment for any of the following within the last 12 months? To get test results; To have a short conversation about a minor concern; To obtain a further prescription.' Each option / bar is represented as a separate question and so percentages do not add up to 100, Sample size in each = 38.

Question	Percentage Response (%)	Sample Size
Making a follow up appointment	25	40
Making a follow up in the last 12 months as patient was asked to come back	48	29
Follow up appointments in the last 12 months to let the doctor know everything has improved	38	29
Patients aware of booking a telephone conversation	44	43
If unable to see preferred GP, the number of patients happy with the consultation they received from another doctor	88	24

Table 1: Data showing percentage responses to five questions; whether patients were making a follow up or new appointment; whether they were making a follow up appointment as a doctor had asked them to come back; whether they were making a follow up appointment to inform the doctor that everything has improved; whether patients were aware of being able to book a telephone conversation with a doctor and whether patients were happy with the consultation they received from another doctor when their preferred GP was unavailable. Sample size displayed.

### Percentage of Patients Satisfied with Appointment System

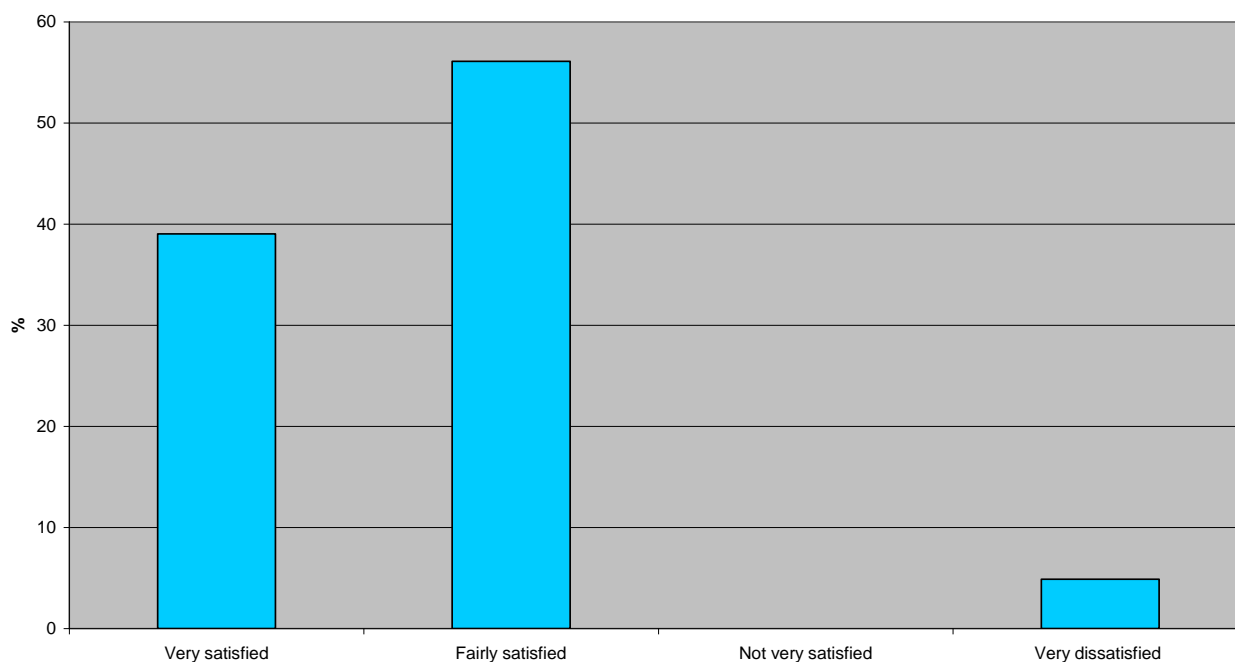


Figure 3. Bar chart showing percentage response from patients when asked ‘Overall, how satisfied are you with the appointment system in the practice?’ Sample size = 41

### Conclusion

Initial data from the GP patient survey carried out by Ipsos MORI found that 63% (S=205) of patients at this practice saw their preferred GP, compared to a national average of 74%. Our survey showed that 38% (S=37) of patients found it ‘Fairly Easy’ to see their preferred GP while 8% (S=37) found it ‘Very Easy’ (Figure 1.). The reason this could be lower than that found by Ipsos MORI could be due to a lower sample size used in this survey and the option of ‘I don’t mind which doctor I see’ accounted for 22% (S=37) of the responses.

Interestingly, Figure 2 shows that a large proportion of patients are booking appointments to see a doctor to obtain a further prescription (55%, S=38) or to have a short conversation about a minor concern (47%,

S=38). Currently, patients at this practice are not able to request a further repeat prescription over the telephone; this is something which could be looked into changing as it could reduce the appointment load for the surgery. Furthermore, Table 1 shows that only 44% (S=43) of patients were aware that they could book a telephone conversation with a doctor, this could account for a high proportion of patients booking appointments with a doctor to have a short conversation about a minor concern. One potential route of action could be to offer telephone consultations when patients initially ring to book an appointment and to increase their overall publicity by using the television screen in the waiting room or posters.

Table 1 shows that 25% (S=40) of patients answering this survey were making a follow up appointment. Also, 48% (S=29) had made a follow up appointment in the last 12 months as they had been told by the doctor to come back and 38% (S=29) of these people answered that they were making a follow up appointment just to inform the doctor that everything has improved. One suggestion could be that doctors advise their patients during consultations that they should only come back if symptoms have not improved and give them a time frame for their symptoms to resolve.

Lastly, the majority of patients (Figure 3; 56%, Fairly Satisfied; 39%, Very Satisfied; S=41) seem happy with the appointment system offered by the practice. Follow on questions suggested that when patients were unable to make an appointment with their preferred GP, the majority booked an appointment with another doctor and 88% (Table 1; S=24) of those were happy with the consultation they received. If the practice is able to reduce the number of unnecessary appointments and increase publicity of booking telephone conversations then doctor's appointment books will free up which may allow patients to see their preferred GPs more easily.

### **Comments**

'Reception look a lot happier and more settled. There is a very organised and settled atmosphere in the surgery. Well done'

'More later appointments. I get home from work at 6.15pm'

'Very happy that appointments are now available on Saturdays. Also think the online booking is good'

'Much better now you can book appointments online'

'Being able to book appointments and repeat prescriptions via the Internet is a great help'

'As an example, I wanted to see Dr Buhari this visit but found I needed to wait 1 ½ weeks. I decided an alternative was sensible having only to wait for 2 ½ days'

'I had a five day wait for the first available appointment'

'I always find staff on the reception extremely helpful and friendly'

'Takes a ridiculously long time to get through on the phone – not just in the mornings but at other times during the day too'

'I am very satisfied with the help I get from this practice'

'Used the on-line booking system for the first time and it was very easy and useful'

'The appointments I have made during the last 12 months have been appointments that have been made to see a doctor on the same day. Therefore I have not expected to see a preferred doctor because the most important factor was to obtain an appointment for the same day and not to have to wait several days for an appointment'