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Addressing evolving patient perceptions of clean

Recognising consistent high performance at Epworth HealthCare

Patient perceptions of hospital cleanliness have shifted dramatically since the pandemic.

“Hospitals are unfamiliar places for many people- whether they come in as a patient or to visit a patient. Often, there are many emotions at play - fear, worry, grief. Ensuring a clean and welcoming environment is a very effective part of making people feel as comfortable as possible during their stay. Congratulations to the teams involved in this work as we continue to ensure exceptional care across all Epworth sites.”

Natasha Toohey

Chief Operating Officer, Hospitals, Epworth HealthCare

Patient experience data from Insync’s healthcare partner, Press Ganey, including innovative analysis of 350,000 patient comments, indicates that whether patients ‘feel’ clean, increasingly correlates with how they rate their overall hospital experience. As the pandemic continues, cleanliness scores continue to decline, widening the gap between pre-and post-pandemic measures of the patient experience.

CAHPS CLEANLINESS TOP-BOX TREND



The need for change

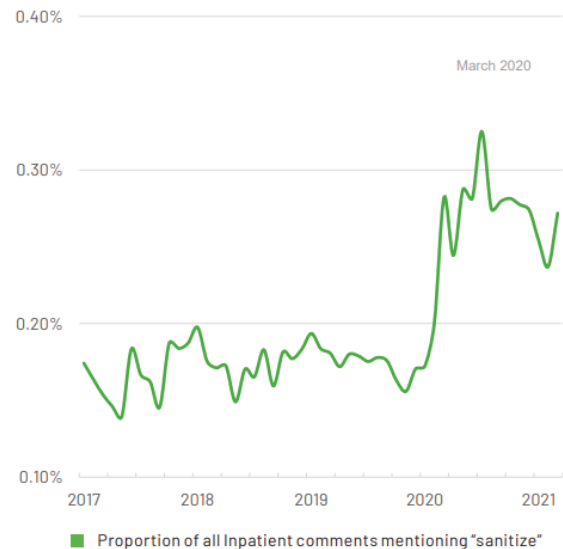


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The absence of hospital-acquired infection is imperative; however, addressing patients' perceptions of hygiene while in the hospital is now an important driver of overall experience outcomes. This is in addition to ensuring cleaning processes and procedures are in place, informing patients and clinical teams of these practices, and projecting friendliness and concern in all patient and family interactions.

This trend created a new challenge for hospital leaders: How do you address shifting perceptions of cleanliness to meet an even higher standard when you're already doing all you can to provide a safe and clean environment?

INPATIENT EXPECTATIONS FOR HYGIENE HAVE INCREASED

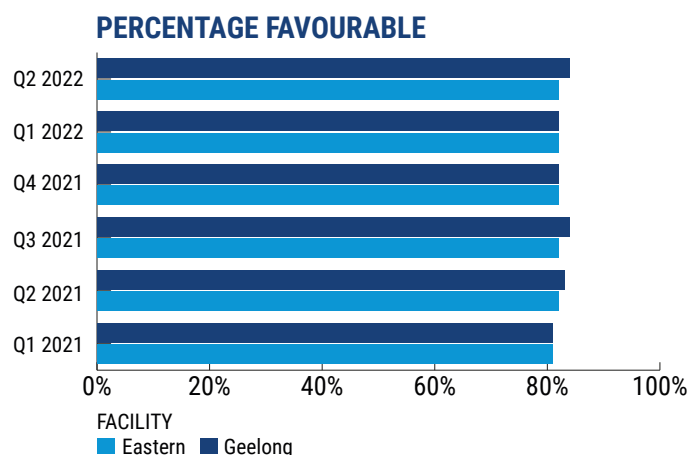


Source: All PG Inpatient surveys with at least one comment, 1/17-3/21 (discharge month)

Why does the patient experience of cleanliness at Epworth Geelong and Eastern stand out?

Two Australian healthcare facilities have bucked this trend with consistently high patient ratings for cleanliness over the past 12 months. Following an initial conversation with Epworth HealthCare's Group Director Patient Experience and Clinical Services Improvements, Sheila Daly, and Group Manager Clinical Service Improvement, Lauren Lawlor, we interviewed Hospitality Services Operations Managers, Jessica Johns of Epworth Eastern and Paul Hosie of Epworth Geelong to find out more about their approach to the patient experience of cleanliness and what they were doing differently to achieve these outcomes. Here is Epworth Geelong and Eastern's success story.

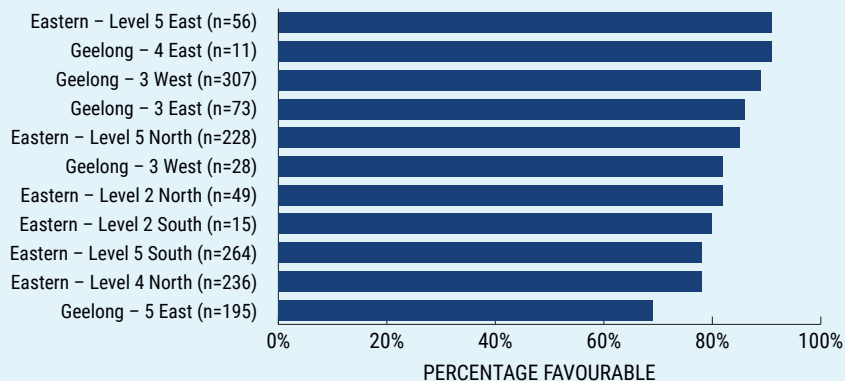
Rather than declining over time, Epworth Geelong and Eastern have maintained consistently high scores over the past year and a half, with more than 80% of patients saying their room and surrounding areas were always cleaned to a high standard.



Outcomes

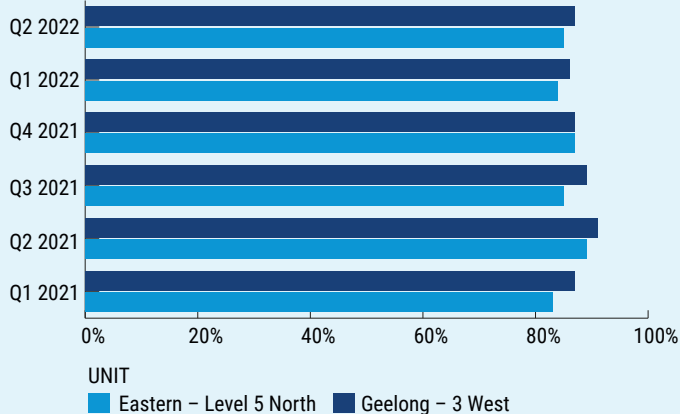
A deep dive into the unit-level data from March to May 2022, shows more than 80% of patients from eight out of 11 units across Epworth Geelong and Eastern believed their room and surrounding areas were always cleaned to a high standard.

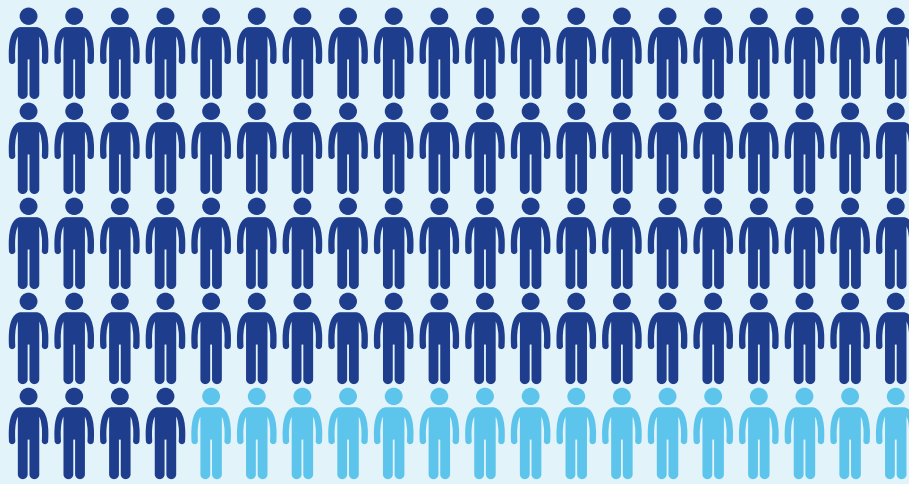
PERCENTAGE FAVOURABLE: 81%



Of those eight units, 3 West at Epworth Geelong and Level 5 North at Epworth Eastern have consistently maintained patient ratings of more than 80% over the past year and a half in relation to the room and surrounding area always having a high standard of cleanliness.

PERCENTAGE FAVOURABLE

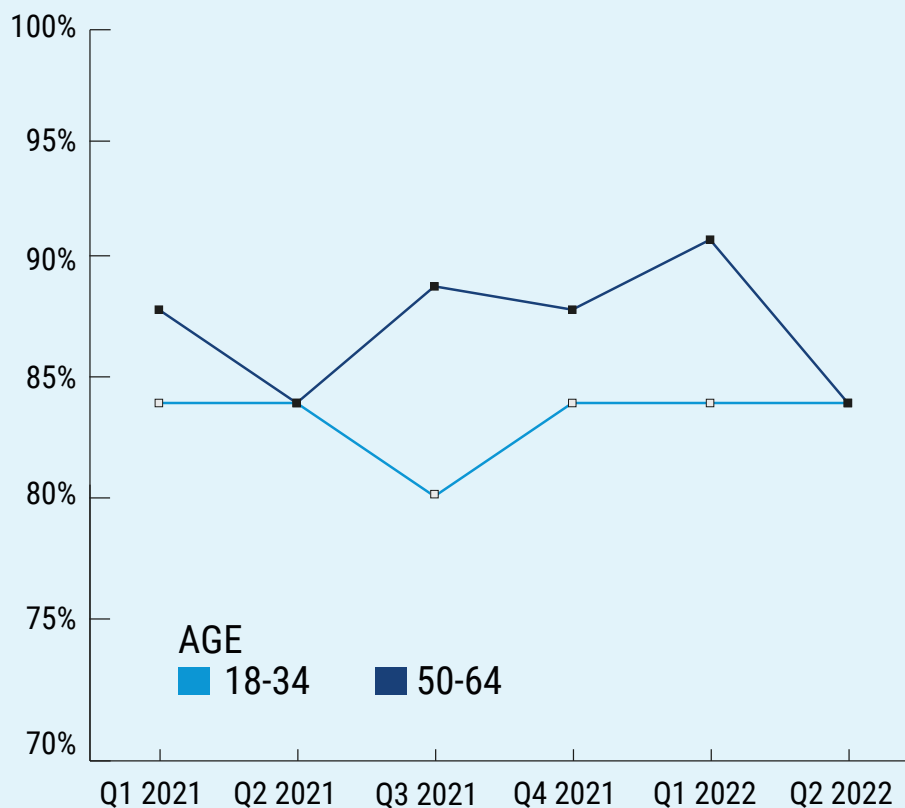




84%
always

Looking at a breakdown by age group, 84% of patients aged 64 and under who responded from March to May 2022, rated Epworth Geelong and Eastern as always having a high standard of cleanliness in their room and surrounding area.

PERCENT FAVOURABLE



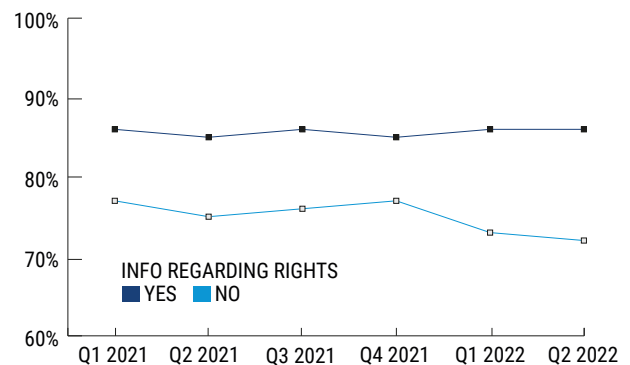
Patients aged 18-34 years and 50-64 years of age consistently rated these facilities at 80% or more over the past year and a half.

Outcomes

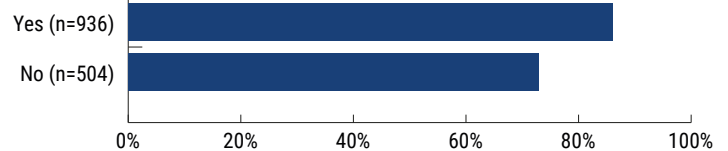
Patients who report receiving information about their rights and responsibilities and how to raise a concern/complaint during their stay typically rate most survey items significantly higher than those who don't receive this information.

This was consistent for patients at Epworth Geelong and Eastern, where their perceptions of the standard of cleanliness in their room and surrounding areas were significantly higher, not only from March to May 2022, but over the past year and a half.

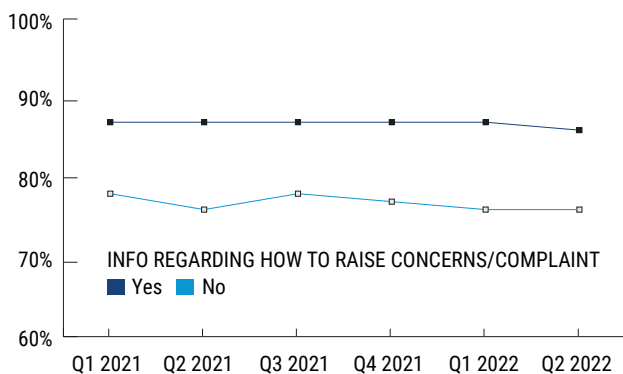
PERCENT FAVOURABLE



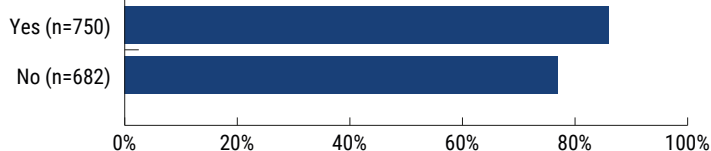
PERCENT FAVOURABLE: 81%



PERCENT FAVOURABLE



PERCENT FAVOURABLE: 81%



Patients are commenting not only on the cleaning practices at Epworth Geelong and Eastern, but also the care and attention taken by environmental services staff:

“The room was lovely and clean which helped to feel as relaxed as I could”

“It is also a wonderfully modern and clean facility with fantastic amenities and food”

“The room and bathroom were spotless, and I had free TV. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for a positive and warming experience.”

“The rooms were clean, plenty of natural light through windows with pleasant views”

“The cleaner who came in every morning was also so lovely and thorough and communicated beautifully”

“Great room, very clean, excellent food!”



How does this compare with other healthcare facilities?

While patient perceptions of cleanliness have significantly declined in our Australian and international benchmarks, Epworth Geelong and Eastern have maintained consistently high scores for almost 18 months.

When we analysed similarly worded questions around cleanliness in other inpatient surveys, we saw healthcare facilities with scores above 80% favourable tend to be in the top 10% of the benchmark.

How did they do it?

The evolution in patient perceptions of cleanliness is re-shaping how experience outcomes are defined and met. Now, clean has gone from a baseline patient expectation to a core value they demand proof their hospital shares. So what are Epworth Geelong and Eastern doing differently to achieve such consistently high results for cleanliness?

Unplanned auditing

- Patients are offered the opportunity to give immediate feedback at the point of care using their patient entertainment system if an area requires attention.
- Leaders are highly engaged, reviewing the feedback and fixing issues on the day to make sure patient voice is heard and addressed as soon as possible.

Team building

- Leaders share feedback and other data with hospitality services team members to give them the opportunity to share their perspectives. At team meetings, hospitality services managers emphasise the importance of cleaning and procedures. Every team member is accountable for the service they provide.
- Hospitality services managers liaised other departments, such as the Clinical Services Team for their input / involvement.

Leverage feedback

- More negative patient feedback was received when less experienced agency staff provided service. The hospitality services team recognised how important it was to avoid using agency staff and provide the service with their own staff whenever possible, because the team understands the culture of the organisation and what is required to provide the best service to patients. Hospitality services team members were more willing to offer help and work extra shifts rather than using agency staff. However when agency staff were required, the hospitality services team will take extra care to ensure they were sufficiently oriented to the facility and trained on the standard of service required.

On boarding training

- Leadership make sure training of new staff is provided in a consistent way. They have two designated staff recognised for their high quality service to provide training to ensure the same message and culture are delivered to new staff.

Set expectations

- Leadership helps team members to understand the challenging healthcare context they are facing. Despite staff shortages and supply chain issues, they don't compromise on the standard of service required.

Hospitals seeking to remain best-in-class should consider:

- Building a strong engaged team
- Offering opportunities to both patients and team members to give feedback
- Leader rounding to resolve issues in real time
- Implementing a holistic cleaning strategy and communicating this to patients and all staff



“Everyone contributes and plays a part in making patients feel safe and supported during their hospital stay. We are very proud of the whole team at Epworth HealthCare and the ongoing commitment to continually striving to improve our patients and loved ones’ experiences of our services and care.”

Sheila Daly

Group Director Patient Experience and Clinical Services Improvements, Epworth HealthCare

Insync focuses on four critical success factors to enhance your success.



Attract and retain the right people



Align and engage your employees



Understand and meet client needs



Build cohesive leadership teams



Success. Mapped.