

EC PATIENT SAFETY CONSULTATION – MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS 8-10

	Very Important	Important	Not particularly important	Not important	Not at all important
8. How important would a national commitment to improving patient safety in your country be? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. How important would a national patient safety strategy in your country, (perhaps as part of a general healthcare quality strategy) be? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. How important is it to have an EU strategy for patient safety ? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

QUESTION 11

What types of adverse events do you think competent authorities in your country should be prioritising in their efforts to reduce? In order of importance, please rank the following from 1-7, 1 being the highest priority in your opinion:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Medication-related event (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical device or equipment-related event (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Healthcare-associated infection (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Error in diagnosis (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

QUESTIONS 13-15

	Very Important	Important	Not particularly important	Not important	Not at all important
13. How important is it to have a dedicated national resource commitment for patient safety initiatives in your country? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. How important is it to have resources identified at the healthcare organisation level for patient safety initiatives in your country? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. How important is it to have dedicated resources at the EU level to support Member States in addressing patient safety concerns? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

QUESTIONS 16-20

	Very Important	Important	Not particularly important	Not important	Not at all important
16. How important is it that patients should be seen as experts on patient safety in your country? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. How important is it that patients should not just informed but also empowered to take part in patient safety and quality programmes in your country? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. How important is it to have systems in place at national and local level to involve patient groups? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. How important is it that patients and the public should be informed about potential and actual patient safety incidents and adverse events in your country? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. How important is it that patients (and/or their families) should be suitably supported in the aftermath of a patient safety incident? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

QUESTIONS 22-24

	Very Important	Important	Not particularly important	Not important	Not at all important
22. How important is it that patient safety is treated seriously by the management of healthcare organisations in your country? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. How important is it for healthcare providers to have effective and comprehensive communications systems on patient safety issues and concerns in place? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. How important is it for every healthcare provider to have a senior person responsible for the safety of patients? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

QUESTIONS 25-29

	Very Important	Important	Not particularly important	Not important	Not at all important
25. How important would further educating health professionals in your country in the area of patient safety be in reducing adverse events? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. How important would including patient safety in the continuing professional development of health professionals in your country be in reducing adverse events? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. How important are systems regulating health professionals, including disciplinary procedures, in efforts to minimise unsafe care in your country? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. How important are professional standards and codes of practice for health professionals in efforts to minimise unsafe care in your country? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. How important is it for health professionals to be suitably supported in the aftermath of a patient safety incident? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

QUESTIONS 31-34

	Very Important	Important	Not particularly important	Not important	Not at all important
31. How important is it for there to be a national reporting and learning system that collects, analyses and monitors information on adverse events and patient safety incidents in your country? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. How important is it for incident and adverse event data and the results of analyses to be evaluated and shared nationally in your country, without being used to discipline individuals? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. How important is it for there to be a national (or regional) organisation (institute, agency etc) that actively seeks out and tries to spread best practice and learning in your country? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. How important is it for the data from national (or regional) reporting and learning systems to be pooled at the EU level as a common resource for learning? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

QUESTIONS 35-38

	Very Important	Important	Not particularly important	Not important	Not at all important
35. How important is it for there to be a common patient safety classification or terminology system in your country? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. How important is it for common classification or terminology system to be developed and used throughout the European Union? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. How important is it for a common set of patient safety indicators to exist in your country? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. How important is it for a common set of patient safety indicators to be developed and used throughout the European Union? (optional)

<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

QUESTIONS 39-42

	Very Important	Important	Not particularly important	Not important	Not at all important
39. How important is it for there to be a system of minimum patient safety standards for healthcare organisations in place in your country? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. How important is it for there to be a common set of minimum standards for patient safety for all healthcare organisations within the EU? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41. How important is it for there to be a system of external assessment of healthcare organisations in respect of patient safety in your country? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42. How important is it for there to be a common system of external assessment for all healthcare organisations in the EU in respect of patient safety? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

QUESTIONS 45-48

	Very Important	Important	Not particularly important	Not important	Not at all important
45. How important is it for resources to be allocated to patient safety research in your country? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
46. How important is increased co-operation between EU Member States, supported by the European Community, on the	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

priority-setting, and the commissioning, of patient safety research? (optional)

47. How important would a database at the EU level be, which would bring together results of patient safety research and other learning and experiences, to be used as a common European resource? (optional)

48. How important are I.T tools aimed at providing health professionals with relevant, timely and up-to-date information, such as comprehensive electronic health records, decision support systems, e-prescription support and IT-based surgery training, to efforts to reduce harm? (optional)

QUESTIONS 52-57

	Very Important	Important	Not particularly important	Not important	Not at all important
52. How important is for there to be an arbitration system for settling complaints without going to court in your country? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
53. How important is it for patients to have access to available information on the redress available to them if they (or their families) are harmed by healthcare in your country or in other EU countries? (optional)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
54. How important is it for the system of redress in your country to be based on the ability of the patient to prove an error was made by one or more healthcare professionals? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
55. How important is it for there to be a national-wide system for calculating compensation payments in your country? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
56. How important is it for compensation systems in your country to cover not only physical harm but other factors such as loss of income? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
57. How important would it be to have an EU-wide system of redress? (optional)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

QUESTIONS 58-59

58. Adequate steps are being taken in your country to tackle the problem of patient safety – Disagree

59. The European Community can play a role in supporting Member States in their efforts to address patient safety concerns – Strongly Agree

EC PATIENT SAFETY CONSULTATION - LONGER WRITTEN QUESTIONS

QUESTION 21

What further action, if any, would you like to see in your country to improve the involvement of the patient or public in patient safety policies and programmes?

As personal safety as well as the quality of therapy are the primary concerns of patients, they should be consulted and involved in the development of patient safety policies and programmes through representation by relevant patient groups. Every relevant voice should be heard at EU and Member State level when attempting to improve patient safety levels and that includes patients, healthcare professionals and industry. Patients should be informed about choices of best available technologies for treatment. Patients should especially give their informed consent if products, contrary to the manufacturer specifications, that have been previously been used on other patients are part of the therapy and therefore could present a risk to the patient.

QUESTION 30

What further action, if any, do you think needs to be taken to improve the knowledge and awareness of patient safety issues and increase the application of safer practice actions among health professionals in your country?

Public awareness of patient safety issues is important, and the EU should be at the forefront of this. Possible means of achieving this could include information campaigns or greater engagement with healthcare professionals across the EU to better disseminate knowledge about both the risks, and procedures that are already in place to ensure patient safety. Patients should have full information to hand simply and quickly in case of need.

In terms of safer practices among health professionals there is an example that is particularly salient for the Medical Devices field. Firstly, an increasing number of hospitals in the European Union reprocess and reuse medical devices designed for single use in the belief that this can save money. This assumption is incorrect. Unlike reusable devices, single use medical devices (SUDs) are not designed to be de-assembled, de-contaminated, re-assembled and reused. Their safety and functionality can be jeopardized by reprocessing, with potentially severe consequences for the patient such as infection, injury and errors in diagnosis or treatment. The financial decisions taken by healthcare authorities and managers represent both a substandard consideration of patient safety, and also a false economy in that the negative occurrences end up costing more than the saving on re-using devices. Clinicians are often unaware about the decision taken by hospitals to reprocess SUDs and are equally unaware that they are exposed to liability as a result. The EU must take action to redress this situation. Patients are not being informed when devices which are not intended to be re-used, are being re-used in their procedure. This does not represent the openness and transparency that the patient should be able to expect. Informing the patient and providing the patient with a choice on something this important should be standard practice.

Genuine action needs to be taken first to ensure better safety for European patients. Communication is important but if it is only a public gesture and not backed up by genuine improvements in practice then the objective has not been met. This point is particularly pertinent to growing public concern about Healthcare Associated Infections.

QUESTION 43

If your response to Question 39 is in favour of a system of minimum patient safety standards, which organisation(s) do you think should be responsible for setting and monitoring performance against these standards in your country?

Any system should drive improvement safety standards whilst respecting the differences in Member State health systems. Governments should be able to take responsibility or delegate it to a relevant body/organisation in the system. Consultation with relevant bodies such as patients' organisations and industry experts should take place. Failure to

adhere to minimum patient standards or a general lack of focus on improving patient safety should be discouraged by the EU in some manner.

Whichever system is utilised by Member States though, the overall responsibility should lie with the government to ensure the safety of its patients. The role of the EU here is to set the agenda and then employ checks and balances to make sure Member States are delivering on this commitment.

QUESTION 44

If your response to Question 40 is in favour of a system of external assessment for patient safety, which organisation(s) do you think should be responsible for carrying out such an assessment in your country?

The Healthcare Commission in the United Kingdom is a good example of a body which can assess levels of patient safety. Their main duties include assessing the management, provision and quality of NHS healthcare and public health services and reviewing the performance of each NHS trust (local providers/managers of healthcare). Information on their findings are made available to the public.

QUESTION 49

In which areas of patient safety do you think more research needs to take place, if any? Possible areas include research on the extent of harm, the type of harm, on patient safety interventions, on the economic costs of harm, on harm outside the hospital setting and any others you feel are currently under-researched.

Research into Healthcare Associated Infections is vital in terms of making more informed decisions in reducing the prevalence of the viruses such as MRSA, and also reducing the risk to patients. The EU should make funds available to researchers in this field with the view of best introduction of safety processes, better knowledge of infection and use of technology designed to avoid healthcare associated infections

Re-use of medical devices which are only intended for one time use is dangerous for patients and this practice should be avoided. If further research is required to convince certain healthcare authorities of the importance of ceasing to use single-use devices more than once, then this should also be a priority. This could take place as a facet of broader research on Healthcare Associated Infections, as the evidence available now suggests that re-using single use medical devices also contributes to the spread of infections in hospitals through contamination which should not be able to occur with proper use of the devices.

QUESTION 50

If you answered positively to Question 47 (How important would a database at the EU level be, which would bring together results of patient safety research and other learning and experiences, to be used as a common European resource?), what type of information should be held centrally?

Comparable data on patient safety from EU Member States would be an excellent resource for patients and healthcare professionals alike. The type of information that should be held to demonstrate trends in patient safety at both Member State and EU level includes statistics on patient injury, infection, misdiagnosis, misuse of medical devices, dosing errors with pharmaceuticals etc. This will enable patients in Europe to access full and transparent data simply, and healthcare professionals/healthcare management to use it as a tool in exchanging best practice with other countries and striving to improve the situation.

QUESTION 51

Again, if you answered positively to question 47, who or which organisation should be responsible for maintaining the central mechanism?

The European Commission could take this responsibility. Patient safety is an area where the EU can undoubtedly make a difference for Member States and their citizens, as co-ordination and sharing of experience are significant factors in improving the situation. The EU should set a broad patient safety agenda and then monitor Member State progress in tackling the problems they face. For this to happen, comparable data is of

course essential. The trend is to give a growing number of duties to the EMEA, but as an agency it needs to be financed accordingly and organised in a manner that is suitable for its increasing levels of responsibility. In particular, the option of assigning to EMEA certain duties in the evaluation of medical devices should be carefully considered in terms of additional dedicated staff with large knowledge of the sector and of the differences in respect of medicinal products.

QUESTION 60

What (further) action needs to take place in your country at the national, regional and/or local levels to improve patient safety?

Firstly, a simple step that could be taken to immediately remove the potential for patient harm is to ensure that hospitals are not using, or not directed to use by the Member State health system, single use medical devices more than once. It would be also important that Member States put in place an effective surveillance system to sanction any deviation from this requirement. This would instantly prevent a significant number of patient infections, misdiagnosis and other causes of harm. Data also suggests that the spread of MRSA and other infections is helped by this practice.

Secondly, specific patient safety training should be given to healthcare professionals. This could either take place during the training to become a doctor, nurse or other professional, or later for those who are already qualified.

Finally, there are simple medical devices which can be utilised to reduce the risk of a number of patient safety problems, most notably at this time Healthcare Associated Infections. Member State health systems and regional health managers should investigate the benefits that new medical device technology has to offer.

The growing number of cost-cutting initiatives in healthcare procurement has the strong potential to jeopardise patient safety. Price as the principal driver of purchasing decisions risks overlooking other very important aspects of medical devices, such as enhanced safety features and manufacturer provided education, training and after-sales support.

QUESTION 61

In which areas of patient safety should the European Community play a role in supporting Member States in their efforts to address patient safety concerns and how should this support work in practice?

1 – Providing a forum for Member States to exchange best practice

This could take the form of specific Council meetings on patient safety, European level conferences and data exchange.

2 – Patient Safety minimum standards

The introduction of minimum standards of care that EU citizens are entitled to would let patients know where they stand more clearly. They would also provide a target for Member States to attain. However, the standards should not be seen as a hurdle to jump over or an end goal. Healthcare providers in Europe should take the standards as a minimum level expected, and aim to provide a service to its patients which exceeds the level of care that they are entitled to.

3 – Research and project funding

The European community has a great deal of resources to encourage the development of the Union in all areas. Further funding for safety research and initiatives would of course be very useful in terms of technical developments and making tangible improvements in individual hospital, surgeries etc. Patient safety is a fine example of an area where the EU can contribute to citizens' everyday lives positively.