

The Power of Patient Stories

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Let me tell you a story...

Stories
powerfully
complement
CAHPS
surveys

Stories are a
tool for
quality
improvement

Stories are a
tool for
public
reporting

Stories
about many
different
kinds of
experience
can be
rigorously
elicited

... about the power of stories...



... with **COVID** as a
main character.

AUGUST 2020 –
MAY 2021

surveys: 336
comments: 407



THREE Distinct Areas of Added Value

- Provide concrete and actionable examples of aspects of care already being measured (INTEGRAL)
- Highlight elements of composites that are not being directly measured (PROXIMAL)
- Highlight domains of care that are important to patients but not included on CG-CAHPS surveys (DISTAL)

THE
MILBANK QUARTERLY
A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF POPULATION HEALTH AND HEALTH POLICY

What Words Convey: The Potential for
Patient Narratives to Inform Quality
Improvement

CG CAHPS Domains



Communication

Access

Office Staff

Care coordination

Integral: Communication



Discussing COVID



Providers may spend less time, but it's okay



Masks can make communication difficult



Providers remain responsive and kind despite pandemic



Proximal

Communication:
Reassuring,
insufficient, useful

Coordination: For
COVID testing, for
vaccines, using
remote modalities

Access: Working,
difficult, delayed,
necessary, hard

Office Staff: Not
physically present,
compassionate

Excellent care despite pandemic

Understand and accept changes in care

Empathy with providers

Distal:
Grace for
Providers

Getting guidance

Post COVID symptoms

Discerning when to go to hospital

Knowledge of COVID

Distal:
COVID Care

Worked well

Difficult to manage for ill/infirm

Safe/not safe

Distal:
Waiting Area

Care has improved

Institution should not violate its own rules

Institution should create better rules

Institution should enforce its own rules

Distal:
Changing
Institutional
Policies

CAHPS: Blending science and stories...

Using And Misusing Anecdote In Policy Making

[John E. McDonough](#)

HealthAffairs

Amygdala and heart rate variability responses from listening to emotionally intense parts of a story

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Torben Ellegaard Lund ^a



... because stories are essential.

“Narrative imagining — story — is the fundamental instrument of thought. Rational capacities depend upon it. It is our chief means of looking into the future, or predicting, of planning, and of explaining.”

- *Mark Turner, cognitive scientist, linguist & author*

“In the future, your survey should account for Telehealth visits... since the onslaught of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Accounting for such non-physical visits will necessarily change certain questions in the survey....” – *NIS respondent*

“Free text, narrative feedback were preferred to checkboxes, surveys and patient satisfaction style ratings.”

“Everything must be made as simple as possible. But not simpler.”

- *Albert Einstein*



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Patients providing feedback using NIS

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