

S.A. Bogachevskaya<sup>1</sup>, N. A. Kapitonenko<sup>2</sup>

## QUESTIONING OF PATIENTS WITHIN AN INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF MEDICAL SERVICES

### ABSTRACT

With the aim to identify the interactive questionnaire advantages and disadvantages a comparative analysis of this questionnaires developed by the specialists of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation (the Order the Russian Ministry of Health from May 14, 2015 № 240) and standard questionnaires used in the paper was held, as well as the survey of 122 potential patients for their opinion of the interactive questionnaire on official websites of the Ministry of Health institutions of the Khabarovskiy krai.

Results and discussion. Low initiative of patients on the Internet has been revealed (for half of a year the total number of respondents to the outpatient questionnaire was no more than 800 people, the hospital questionnaire was no more than 2350 people from 92 institutes). A formed sample is too small to assess the performance of institutions separately. Interactive questionnaires are still difficult to fill in for patients due to the inertia of the older generation, as well as the indifference and lack of initiative of young people. Up to 2/3 of respondents required further explanation on the questionnaire, which increases the number of unanswered questions and, in the case of the interactive version, it does not allow to register the respondent's profile on the site. Presented unambiguous answers to the questionnaire ("yes" or "no") lose 5 ones proposed in the recommendations № 118 of the year 2009 of Compulsory health insurance fund.

Conclusion. Low population initiative limits the widespread use of interactive questionnaires for public consultation. Absence of open issues restricts the ability of patients to express their own opinion. Imprecise wording of "service satisfaction" and "specialists' competence" in the proposed issues lead to the needs of clarifying information and increase the number of incorrect answers among the respondents. Unfortunately, the answers to most questions ("yes" or "no") lose in accuracy during calculation the satisfaction rate. In order to increase the number of answered questions during the survey a supervisor/consultant should be present.

**Keywords:** interactive questionnaire, independent assessment of the quality of organizations' service, sociological research, the accessibility and quality of medical care.

### INTRODUCTION

Modern World Health Organization strategy puts increasingly the interests of the citizen in the framework of the institution and industry, as well as state policy of health care provision. Under the new business conditions, monitoring of medical care through the study of health care customer satisfaction took firmly its place among the other social marketing methods [1,2,3]. It is necessary to share the sociological studies of public opinion (with regard to the social composition of the population) and a marketing study of consumer demand in terms of their satisfaction with specific institutions or specific types of care [4]. When sociological research in medicine are conducting, in particular, questions of competence of patients in the evaluation of various aspects of the institutions and the leveling effect of the set of exogenous, psychological and other factors on the formation of public perceptions raise [4].

Based on the requirements of the Federal Law № 323-FZ "On the basis of public health protection in the Russian Federation", an action plan for the formation of an independent assessment of the quality of organizations providing social services for 2013-2015 was defined and approved by the Order of Government of the Russian Federation on March 30, 2013 N 487-p through a specially designed questionnaire, posted and available to patients on the websites of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, authorities of subjects of the Russian Federation in the field of health, local government and health care organizations [5-10].

According to the standard method (paper variants, an oral explanation of the issues etc.), a public opinion poll of 558 patients was conducted. In accordance with the official guidelines and legal documents, it included blocks of questions related to access to medical care for the population and the quality of services by a 5-point scale. We proposed the "open" and "closed" form of questions [12]. We held a comparative analysis of the questionnaires of this study, and the on-line questionnaires, developed by experts of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation. These questionnaires both assessed the quality of medical organizations service in the region, *involved in the program of state guarantees of free medical care to citizens* [11]. The results of the on-line questionnaires on the sites of the Ministry of Health of Khabarovskiy Krai institutions were analyzed. We asked 122 potential patients to respond to "the questionnaire for assessing the quality of services the medical organizations in outpatient and inpatient settings" on the website, after that we purpose them to deliver on these on-line questionnaires [10]. The study involved 122 respondents aged 20 to 82 years. According to social status, 33.6% were retired, 55.7% employed, 4.1% students and 6.6% of non-working citizens. The women were 67.2%, the men were 32.8%.

## RESULTS

Only 12.3% of respondents had information about the existence of on-line questionnaires, 9.0% were medical personnel, even 3.3% were related to the medicine. 73.8% of the respondents found not immediately the questionnaire on the websites on the Internet, 11.4% of them found quite quickly and 14.8% were undecided. 67.2% of respondents needed additional explanatory information in the process of completing the questionnaire. Only 4.1% of respondents agreed to search the questionnaire on the Internet on their own initiative, 87.7% refused and another 8.2% found it difficult to response. 72.1% of respondents chose paper version proposed by a health worker as the most suitable, 8.2% preferred the electronic version proposed by the health worker, and only 5.6% preferred an on-line version. Another 13.9% of the respondents found it difficult to answer this question.

Among the main difficulties in completing the questionnaire respondents indicated the following: - almost 90% of the respondents (87.7%) do not know about the existence of such surveys. Another 12.3% of respondents who were already familiar with the questionnaires at the time of the survey turned out mostly health workers. Among these 12.3% neither replied to the questionnaire previously (before the present proposal to participate in the survey); - only 30.3% of respondents, who were looking for the on-line questionnaire, founded immediately its location; - almost 70% (69.7%) required additional explanatory information in the process of completing the questionnaire; - 22.1% have not finished answering the survey questions, got out of the program and actually did not participate in the survey. Most of the respondents full in the paper version of the questionnaire; - 95.1% of respondents would not have to look for it on the Internet and to respond to the questionnaire on their own initiative.

## DISCUSSION

The importance of the use of opinion poll for an independent assessment of the quality of medical services is difficult to overestimate. The amount of subjective evaluations obtained with a properly structured representative samples opens the hidden opportunities for improvement of the activity of institutions, taking into account the real needs of patients, being one of the health care quality management process mechanisms [4,11]. Thus, the choice of venue for the survey and study the composition of representative groups are of paramount importance in the organization of research.

Low initiative for interactive profiles of patients is indicative. So, given the fact that the questionnaires are available on the official websites of the Ministry of Health of the Khabarovsk Territory and medical institutions from September 2015 the total number of responses to the outpatient questionnaire to the end of May 2016 were no more than 800 people, to the hospital questionnaire were no more than 2350 people. In addition, most people willing to participate in the survey are patients with negative attitude.

According to the Order of the Russian Ministry of Health on December 30, 2014 № 956n, the opportunity to use the paper version of the questionnaire when they request it should be provided for patients [7]. Unfortunately, we do not have information about applying for obtaining and completing the paper version of the questionnaire, but on the basis of population activity on the Internet, we can assume that their number is negligible.

On-line forms of questionnaire are still a challenge for patients due to the inertia of the older generation, as well as the indifference and lack of initiative of young people. In addition, the lack of clarification on unclear questions (it took for 2/3 of respondents) increases the number of unanswered questions that, in the case of the online version does not allow registering the respondent's answers on the site. It is worth to remember possible glitches in the system with partial or complete loss of electronic information.

We would also like to have greater clarity on a number of issues proposed in the online questionnaire.

For example, in an on-line questionnaire divided the concept of "competence" (i. e. professionalism) and "satisfaction with service." The term "service satisfaction," the authors of the questionnaire have a view of the kindness and politeness towards patients by the staff, which is a component of public satisfaction with the medical services. In addition, some authors even combine these terms and include the "responsiveness", a conscientious attitude of physicians to perform their duties, as well as careful attention to patients to the criterion of "professionalism" [12].

Terms of service waiting (e. g. outpatient receive, diagnostic studies, as well as the planned hospitalization) at the moment of the appointment card receiving are prescribed in accordance with the territorial program of state guarantees of free medical care to citizens for the respective year. However, a bigger problem for the patients in this context becomes the receiving of this appointment card. In this case the terms are not limited to the program.

It should also be noted that the private clinics, as well as a number of departmental institutions, working with the compulsory health insurance (CHI) program, are not covered by this questionnaire.

During a comparative analysis of the traditional and on-line forms of questionnaires for compliance with the rules of creation and formulation of public opinion polls, established under the Order of the Federal Fund for CMI from 29.05.2009 № 118, the following recommendations attract the attention: "The survey (questionnaire) may be carried out in the form of a questionnaire using "open questions", defined by the initiators of their conduction, and contains the responses in a free form. The interviewers record the respondents' answers to «open questions» the words of the respondents legibly and maximize "(with translation later into formalized responses) [11]. In this case, only «closed questions» are used in the on-line questionnaire, «open questions» are not presented, which limits patients to express their own opinion. There is no possibility of oral consultations on unclear issues.

The samples are too few to assess the performance of individual institutions for a marketing study of consumer demand (initiative of citizens is very low), and the average value of all the institutions are at risk of being incorrect (there are different number of respondents on the websites of various institutions). For a sociological study such approach is not suitable in principle due to the lack of information about the social composition of the respondents.

One of the points of the Order of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation on December 30, 2014 № 956n reads: "It is possible to express the views of recipients of medical services on the quality of services of medical institutions on the official sites" [7]. Unfortunately, only two varieties of the responses ("yes" or "no") lose five ones proposed in the recommendations of the Federal Fund of CHI in 2009. These survey form in the same recommendations is characterized as "survey (questionnaire) under the simplified scheme" [11].

It is desirable to conduct calculations of the average value in all cases of questionnaires taking into account responses with varying degrees of satisfaction and of undecided, which is inevitable when working with real patients [11].

## CONCLUSION

Low population initiative limits the widespread using of on-line questioning as a form of social control. Unfortunately, only two varieties of answers ("yes" and "no") lose to responses with varying degrees of satisfaction in both the perception by patients and the valuation of the average level of satisfaction with medical care. The proposed

imprecise statements of "service satisfaction" and "experts' competence" lead the need for explanatory information, which ultimately reduces the number of completed questionnaires and increases the number of incorrect responds.

The use of on-line questionnaires only "closed questions" limits recommended by the Order of the Russian Ministry of Health on December 30, 2014 № 956n "the possibility of expression of the recipients' meaning about the health service quality in medical organizations" [7]. In order to increase the number of respondents, as well as the quality of their responses questioning should be conducted under the supervision of the curator or consultant.

## REFERENCES

1. Seregina I.F. Rezultaty sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya mneniya naseleniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii o kachestve i dostupnosti meditsinskoy pomoshchi [The results of sociological study of Russian population opinion on the quality and accessibility of medical care] Problemy sotsialnoy gigieny, zdravookhraneniya i istorii meditsiny [Problems of Social Hygiene, healthcare and medical history] 2009 (5), pp. 3-7. (In Russian)
2. Vserossiyskoe sotsiologicheskoe issledovanie mneniya naseleniya o dostupnosti i kachestve meditsinskoy pomoshchi [The All-Russian sociological study of public opinion on the accessibility and quality of medical care] 2010. URL: <http://www.zdrav.ru/articles/practice/detail.php?ID=79106> (accessed in 20 May 2016). (In Russian)
3. Medik V.A. Obshchestvennoe zdorovye i zdravookhranenie: mediko-sotsiologicheskii analiz [Public health and health care: medical and sociological analysis]. Moscow: RIOR; INFRA-M, 2012, 358 p. (In Russian)
4. Siburina T.A. Metodicheskie podkhody k issledovaniyu udovletvorennosti patsientov vysokotekhnologichnoy meditsinskoy pomoshchyu [Methodological approaches to the study of patient satisfaction with high-tech medical care] Sotsialnye aspekty zdorovya naseleniya [Social aspects of public health] 2013, 1 (29) URL: <http://vestnik.mednet.ru/content/view/454/lang,ru/> (accessed in 20 May 2016). (In Russian)
5. O plane meropriyatiy po formirovaniyu nezavisimoy sistemy otsenki kachestva raboty organizatsiy, okazyvayushchikh sotsialnye uslugi, na 2013-2015 gg.: rasporyazhenie Pravitel'stva RF ot 30 marta 2013 g. N 487-r [On a plan for the creating of an independent system of assessment of the quality of social service organizations for the years 2013-2015] URL: <http://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/70250118/#ixzz49doPZqtg> (accessed in 20 May 2016). (In Russian)
6. Ob utverzhdenii metodicheskikh rekomendatsiy po provedeniyu nezavisimoy otsenki kachestva okazaniya uslug meditsinskimi organizatsiyami: prikaz MZ RF ot 14 maya 2015 g. № 240 [On approval of the guidelines for the independent assessment of the quality of medical institutions services: the order of the Russian Federation Ministry of Health on May 14, 2015 № 240]. URL: <http://zdrav.medkhv.ru/sites/files/zdrav/docs/2015/f96cd42ff06e4acbf26a.pdf> (accessed in 20 May 2016). (In Russian)
7. Ob informatsii, neobkhodimoy dlya provedeniya nezavisimoy otsenki kachestva okazaniya uslug meditsinskimi organizatsiyami, i trebovaniyakh k soderzhaniyu i forme predostavleniya informatsii o deyatelnosti meditsinskikh organizatsiy, razmeshchaemoy na ofitsialnykh saytakh Ministerstva zdravookhraneniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, organov gosudarstvennoy vlasti suyevtov Rossiyskoy Federatsii, organov mestnogo samoupravleniya i meditsinskikh organizatsiy v informatsionno-telekommunikatsionnoy seti "Internet": prikaz MZ RF ot 30 dekabrya 2014 g. № 956n [On information, witch necessary to carry out an independent assessment of the quality of medical institutions services, and requirements for the form and content of information on the medical institutions activities, posted on the official websites of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, state authorities of the Russian Federation, local authorities and medical organizations for the information and telecommunication network "Internet": the order of the Russian Federation Ministry of Health on December 30, 2014 № 956n]. URL: <https://www.rosminzdrav.ru/documents/9070-prikaz-ministerstva-zdravoohraneniya-rossiyskoy-federatsii-ot-30-dekabrya-2014-g-956n-ob-informatsii-neobkhodimoy-dlya-provedeniya-nezavisimoy-otsenki-kachestva-okazaniya-uslug-meditsinskimi-> (accessed in 20 May 2016). (In Russian)

8. Ob osnovakh okhrany zdorov'ya grazhdan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii (s izmeneniyami i dopolneniyami ot 25 iyunya 2012 g., 2, 23 iyulya, 27 sentyabrya, 25 noyabrya 2013 g.): federal'nyy zakon ot 21 noyabrya 2011 g. N 323-FZ [On the bases of the health of citizens in the Russian Federation (as amended on June 25, 2012, July 2, 23, September 27, November 25, 2013): the Federal Law of November 21, 2011. N 323 –FZ] URL: [http://chuscrp.ucoz.ru/323-fz\\_ob\\_osnovakh\\_okhrany\\_zdorovja\\_grazhdan.pdf](http://chuscrp.ucoz.ru/323-fz_ob_osnovakh_okhrany_zdorovja_grazhdan.pdf) (accessed in 20 May 2016). (In Russian)

9. Ob utverzhdenii Polozheniya o modeli otrabotki osnovnykh printsipov nepreryvnogo meditsinskogo obrazovaniya spetsialistov s vysshim meditsinskim obrazovaniem v organizatsiyakh, osushchestvlyayushchikh obrazovatelnyuyu deyatel'nost, nakhodyashchikhsya v vedenii Ministerstva zdravookhraneniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, s uchastiem meditsinskikh professional'nykh nekommercheskikh organizatsiy: prikaz ot 11 noyabrya 2013 g. N 837 (v red. Prikaza Minzdrava Rossii ot 09.06.2015 N 328) [On approval of the model working out the basic principles of continuous medical education of specialists with higher medical education in educational organizations under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation Ministry of Health, with the participation of medical professional non-profit organizations: the Order of November 11, 2013. N 837 (as amended of the Order of the Ministry of Health of Russia on June 09, 2015 N 328)]. URL: <http://e.glavbukh.ru/npd-doc.aspx?npmid=97&npid=86163> (accessed in 20 May 2016). (In Russian)

10. O sozdanii obshchestvennogo soveta pri ministerstve zdravookhraneniya Khabarovskogo kraya i provedeniyu nezavisimoy otsenki kachestva raboty meditsinskikh organizatsiy kraya, okazyvayushchikh usluzhi v sfere zdravookhraneniya, uchastvuyushchikh v realizatsii programmy gosudarstvennykh garantiy besplatnogo okazaniya grazhdanam meditsinskoy pomoshchi: rasporyazhenie Ministerstva zdravookhraneniya Khabarovskogo kraya №879- r ot 03.08.2015 [On the creation of the Public Council under the Ministry of Health of the Khabarovskiy kray and the independent evaluation of the quality of regional medical institutions services, involved in the implementation of the program of state guarantees of free medical care for citizens: the Order of the Ministry of Health of Khabarovskiy kray №879- r on August 03, 2015]. URL: <http://zdrav.medkhv.ru/sites/files/zdrav/docs/2015/8ba78464b0763db2a68f.pdf> (accessed in 20 May 2016). (In Russian)

11. Ob utverzhdenii Metodicheskikh rekomendatsiy «Organizatsiya provedeniya sotsiologicheskogo oprosa (anketirovaniya) naseleniya ob udovletvorennosti dostupnost'yu i kachestvom meditsinskoy pomoshchi pri osushchestvlenii obyazatel'nogo meditsinskogo strakhovaniya»: prikaz FFOMS ot 29.05.2009 g. № 118 (v red. ot 26.04.2012 № 86) [On approval of the Methodological Recommendations «Organization of the opinion polling (questionnaire survey) for satisfaction with the accessibility and quality of medical care in the implementation of compulsory health insurance»: the Order of CHIFF on May 29, 2009 № 118 (as amended on 26.04.2012 № 86)] URL: <http://www.tfoms22.ru/docs/prakazi-ffoms/29052009-118/> (accessed in 20 May 2016). (In Russian)

12. Kochkina N.N. Dostupnost i kachestvo meditsinskoy pomoshchi v otsenkakh naseleniya [The availability and quality of medical care according to the population assessment]. Moscow: Izd. dom Vysshey shkoly ekonomiki, 2015, 56 p. (In Russian)

#### THE AUTHORS

Bogachevskaya Svetlana A. - PhD, Head of department FGBU "Federal Center for Cardiovascular Surgery," Health Ministry, Khabarovsk; bogachevskaya@gmail.com;

Kapitonenko Nikolai A. - MD, Professor, Head of the Department Far Eastern State Medical University, Health Ministry, Khabarovsk, ozd\_fesmu@mail.ru.