

The Atrial Fibrillation Patient Journey – Patient Satisfaction from a Single Centre UK Experience

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BACKGROUND

- AF most common clinical arrhythmia
- Prevention of stroke important
- Maintenance of SR?
- AF ablation – a possible ‘cure’
- AF ablation increasing
- Patient satisfaction is an indicator of quality of care^{1,2}

1. Cleary PD, McNeil BJ. Patient satisfaction as an indicator of quality care. *Inquiry*. 1988 Spring;25(1):25-36
2. Werner RM, Chang VW. The relationship between measured performance and satisfaction with care among clinically complex patients. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2008 Nov;23(11):1729-35

AIM

To measure patient satisfaction of catheter ablation for AF during specific stages of the patient journey to guide and improve future patient experiences



METHODS

- Questionnaire-based qualitative study
- March-September 2009
- All pts presenting for an elective AF ablation
- Based on NHS inpatient survey, previously piloted
- ‘Best-of’ and YES/NO format with free text options
- Distributed by hand, returned by post
- Anonymous



Questionnaire for patients undergoing AF ablation procedures

Background:

Are you aware of the name of your heart condition? If so what is it? _____

Was this your first/second/third attendance for an ablation? _____

Please answer the following questions related to THIS attendance only:

Before your admission to the Heart Hospital

1. Were you seen in the outpatient department by a doctor to discuss your condition and planned ablation procedure? YES/NO

If YES, did you feel that *your condition* was adequately explained to you at this appointment?

- a) Yes – completely
- b) Yes – to some extent
- c) No
- d) Don't know

2. Did the doctor explain what would be done during the ablation procedure?

- a) Yes – completely
- b) Yes – to some extent
- c) No
- d) I did not want an explanation

3. Did the doctor explain the *risks and benefits* of the ablation procedure in a way you could understand?

- a) Yes – completely
- b) Yes – to some extent
- c) No
- d) I did not want an explanation

4. During the clinic appointment with the doctor were you told how you could expect to feel after you had had the procedure?

- a) Yes – completely

RESULTS

- 158 patients (162 patient episodes)
- 101 returned = 64% response rate
- 50% first procedure; 28% second; 19% 3+procedures
- Mean age 60.1 yrs (+/- SD 12.1; range 25-88yrs)
- 67% male; 33% female
- 38 procedures under GA (23%)



RESULTS – PRE-PROCEDURE

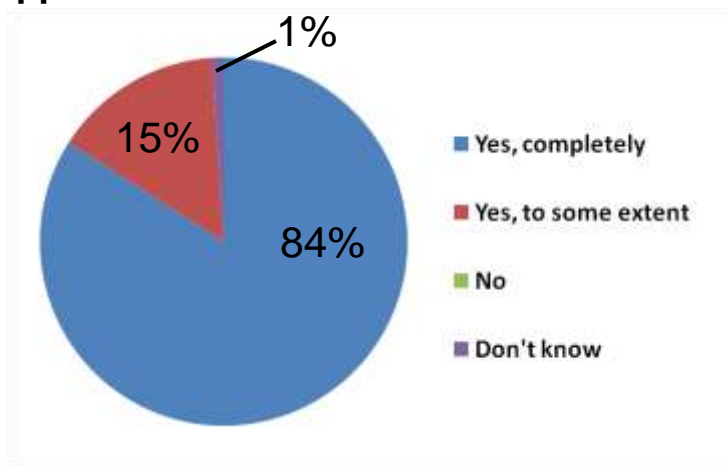
- OPA 93/101 (92%)
- Pre-assessment 99%
 - 43/95 (45%) clinic
 - 53/95 (56%) phone
- 53% written information
- 55% used internet
 - BHF and Wikipedia most popular
 - also google, NICE, pubmed, HRUK, AFA



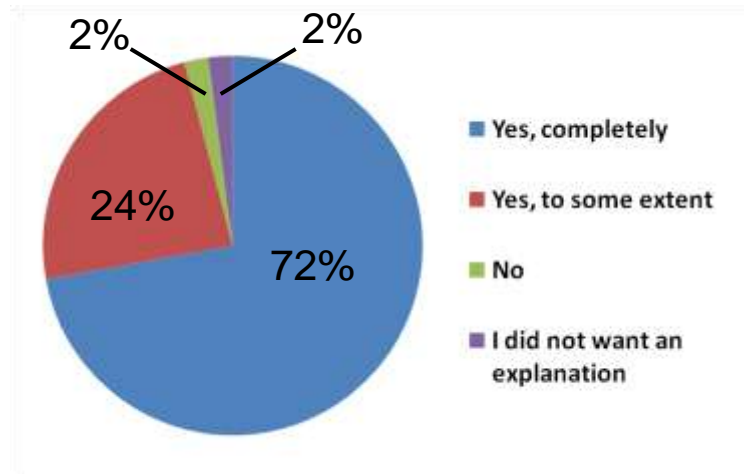
Figure 1

Questions relating to pre-procedural care - medical

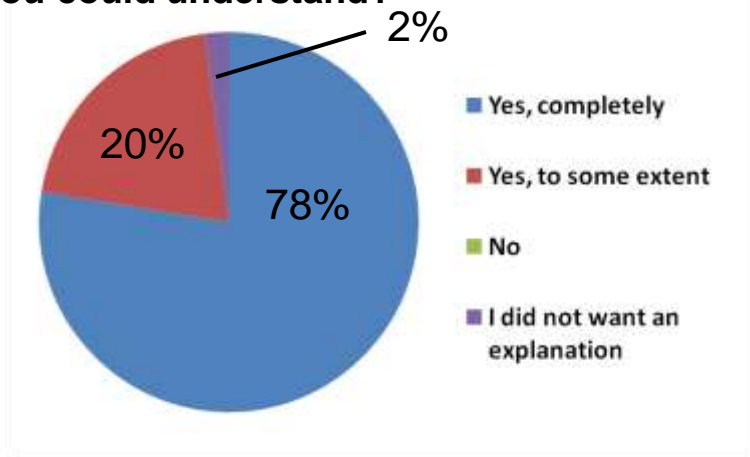
a) Did you feel that your condition was adequately explained to you at this appointment?



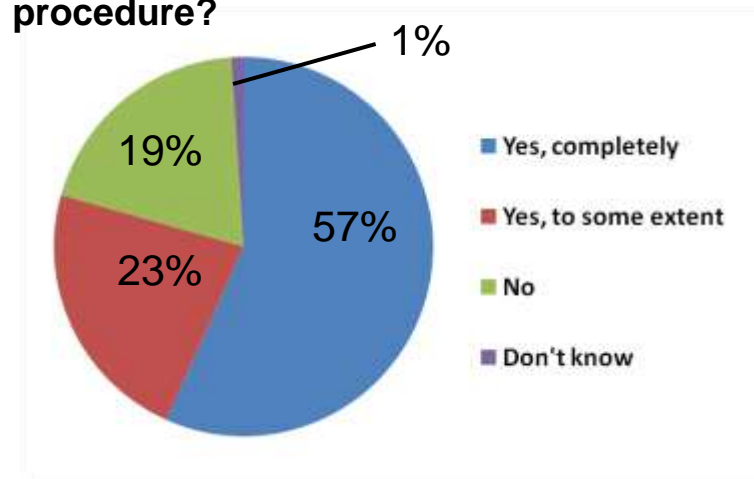
b) Did the doctor explain what would be done during the ablation procedure?



c) Did the doctor explain the risks and benefits of the ablation procedure in a way you could understand?

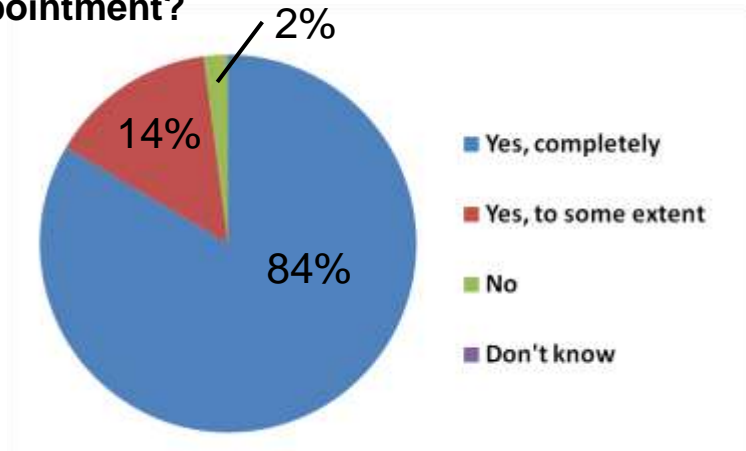


d) During the clinic appt were you told how you could expect to feel after the procedure?

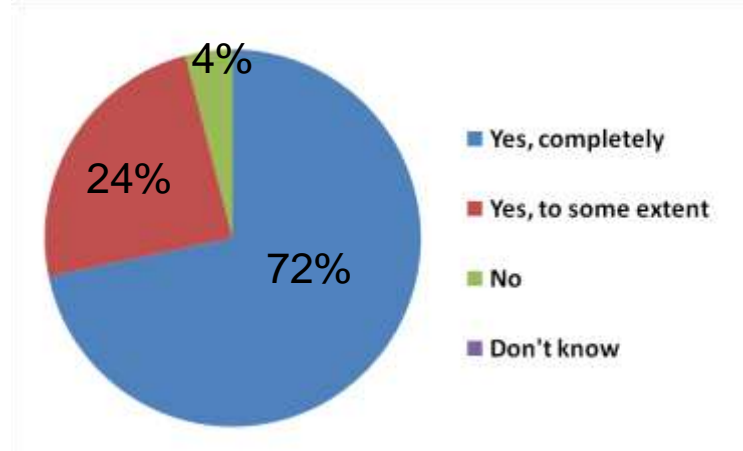


Questions relating to pre-procedural care - nursing

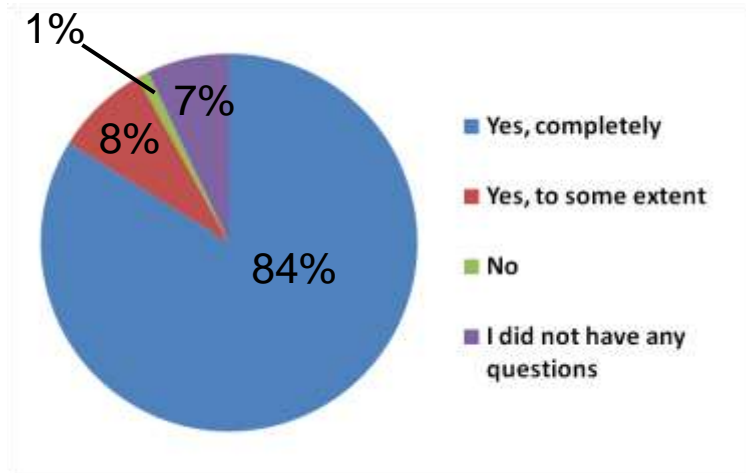
e) Did you feel that your condition was adequately explained to you at this appointment?



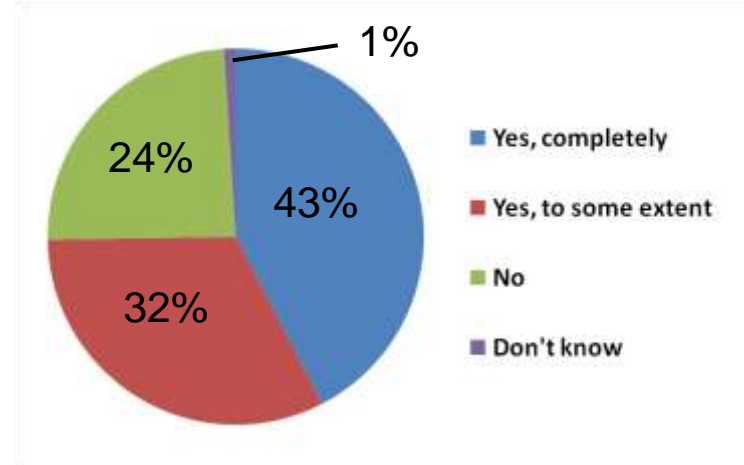
f) Did the nurse explain what would be done during the ablation procedure?



g) Did the pre-assessment nurse answer your questions about your procedure in a way that you could understand?

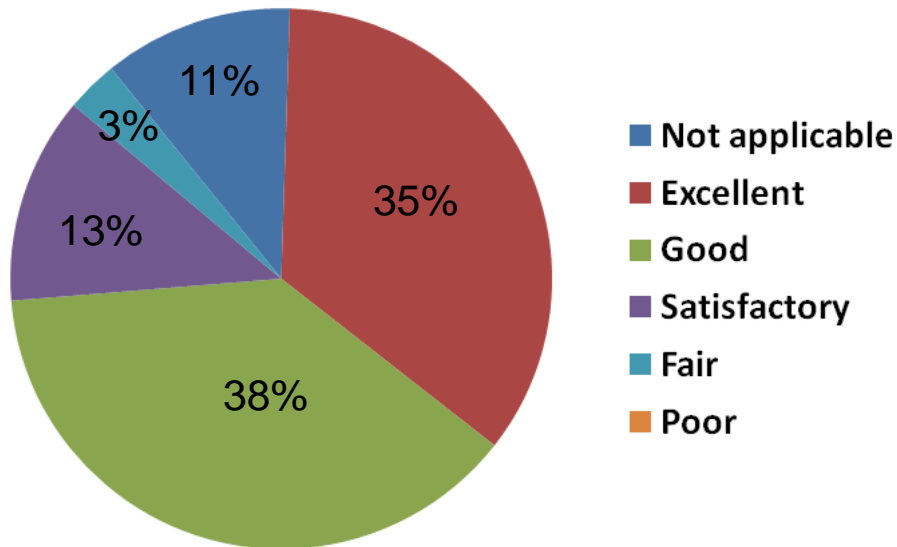


h) At your pre-assessment appointment or telephone call, were you told how you could expect to feel after you had the procedure?

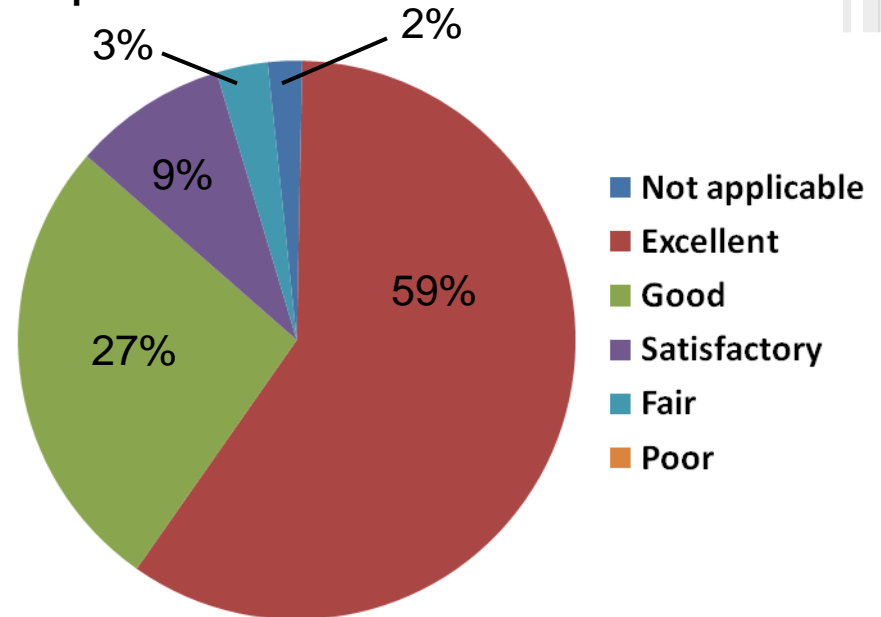


Questions relating to pre-procedural care – overall assessment

i) Overall how would you rate the experience in the outpatient clinic?



j) Overall how would you rate the experience in pre-assessment?



IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO PROCEDURE

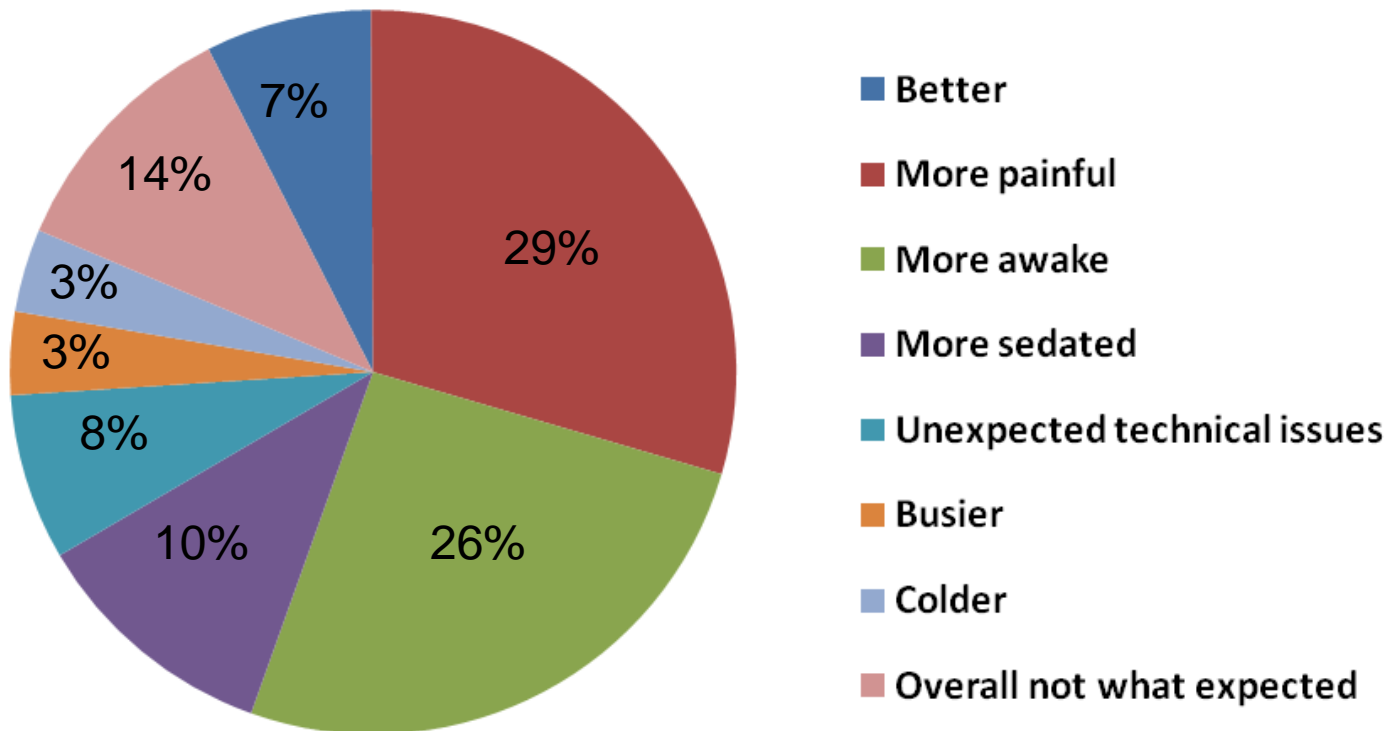
- 97% ready to sign consent
- 95% understood it
- 83% adequate time to read it
- 90% aware of possibility of rpt procedure
- Mean anxiety score (1-10): 3.1 (+/- 2.9)
- 68/77 felt nothing could have been done to reduce anxiety at that time



- Was your experience in the cath lab what you had been expecting? Y = 69/100 N= 31/100

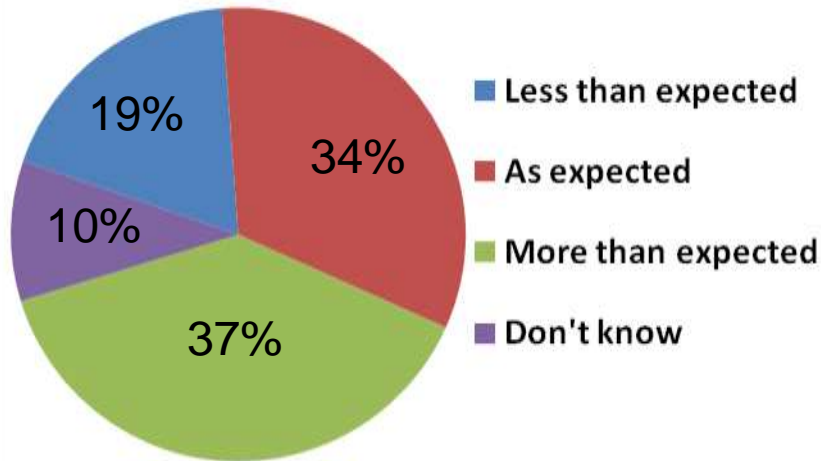
Figure 3 Experience in the cath lab

a) In what way did your experience in the cath lab differ from what you had been expecting?



- Did you experience any discomfort at all during the procedure? **Y = 67/100**

b) How bad was the pain during the procedure?



c) Where was the pain during the procedure?

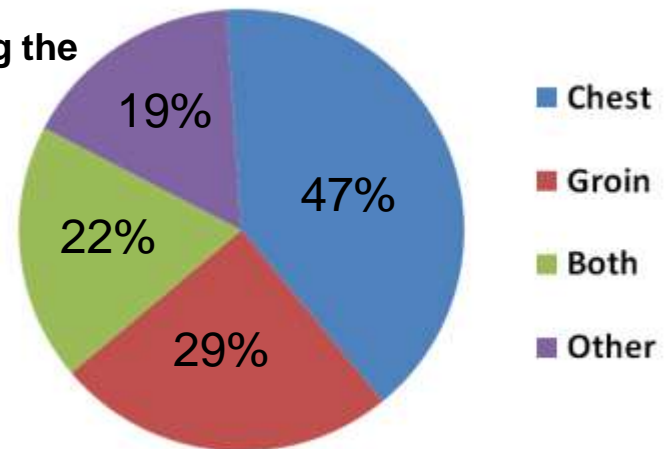
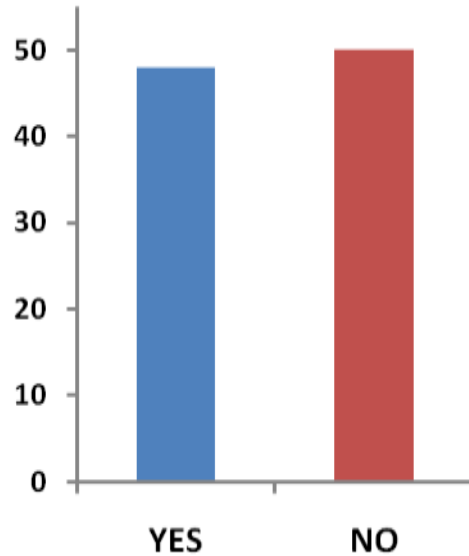
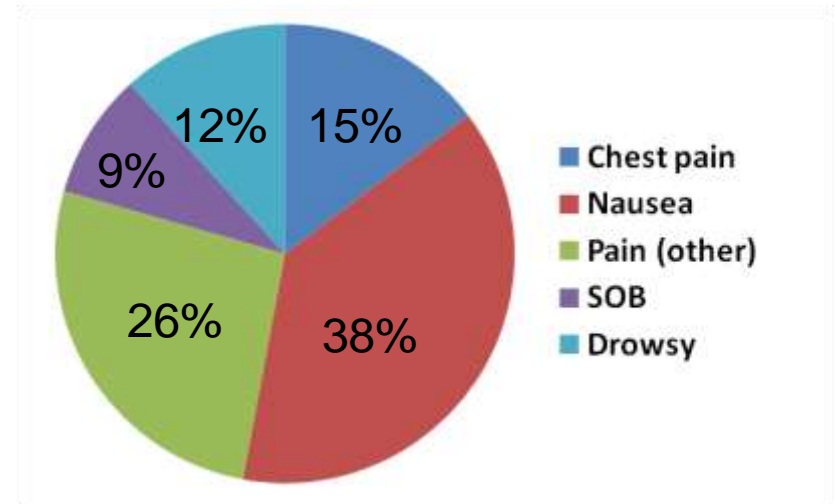


Figure 4 Immediate post-procedural experience

a) Did you feel unwell at all after the procedure?



b) In what way did you feel unwell?



c) Were you in pain or discomfort after the procedure?

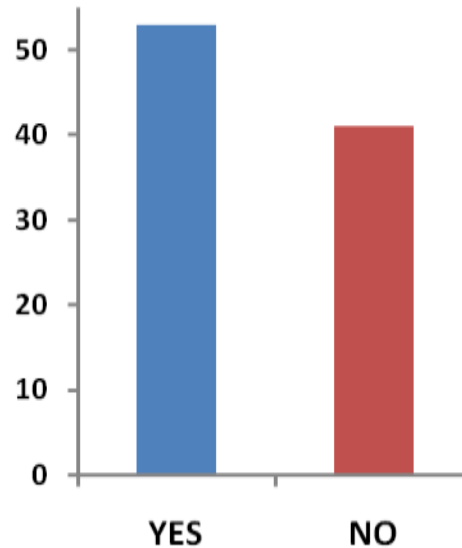


Figure 5 Overall procedural experience

Overall how would you rate your experience in the cath lab?

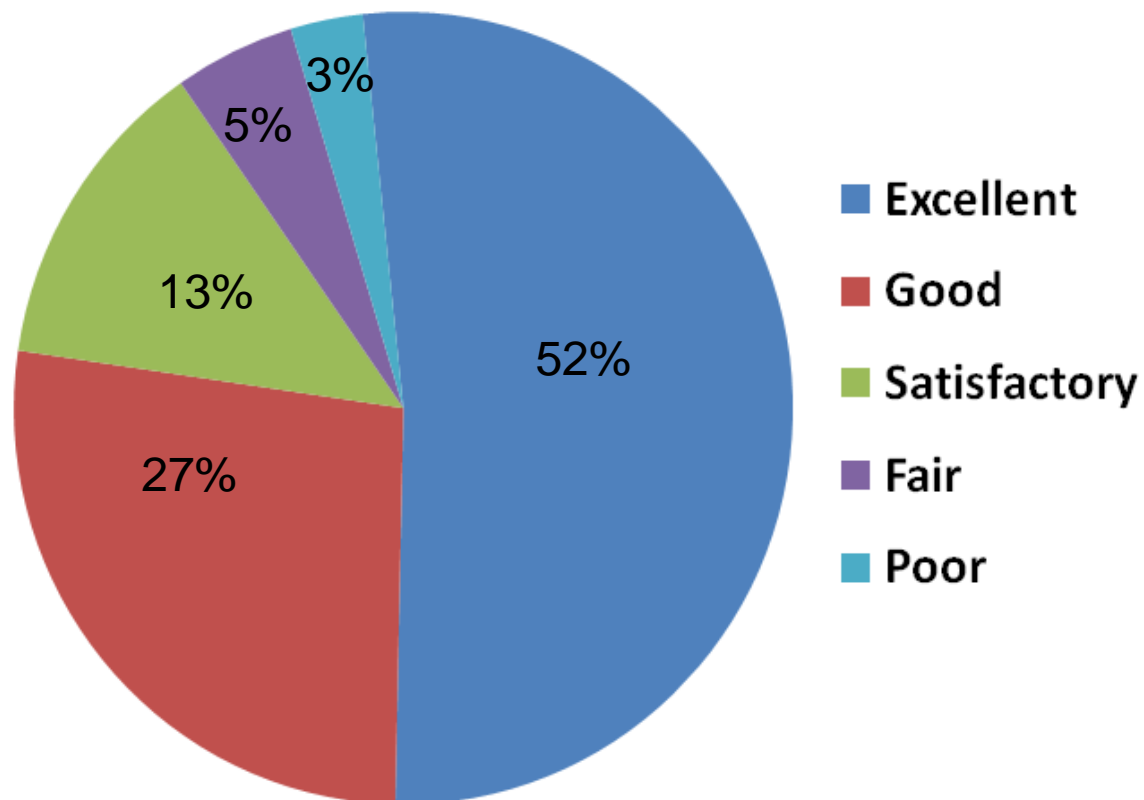
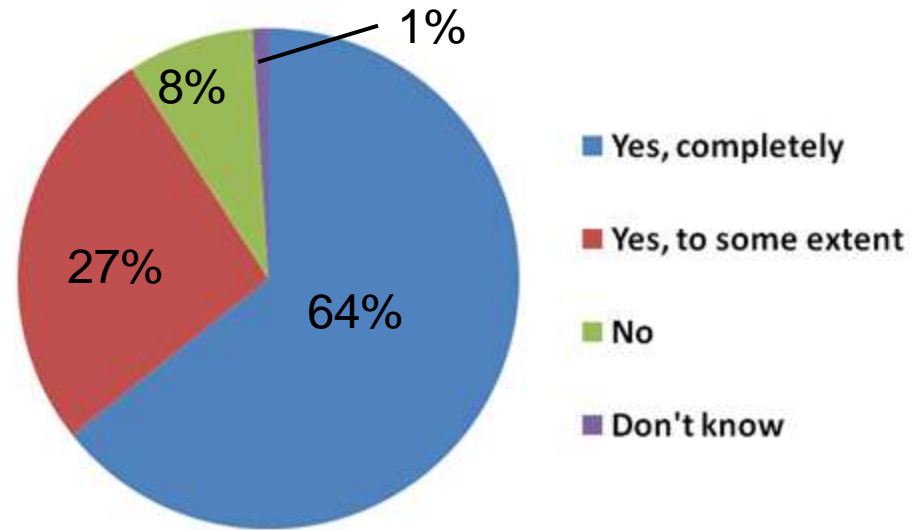


Figure 6 Post-procedural care and communications

a) After the procedure, did a member of staff explain how the procedure had gone in a way that you could understand?



b) Did you have adequate access to staff?

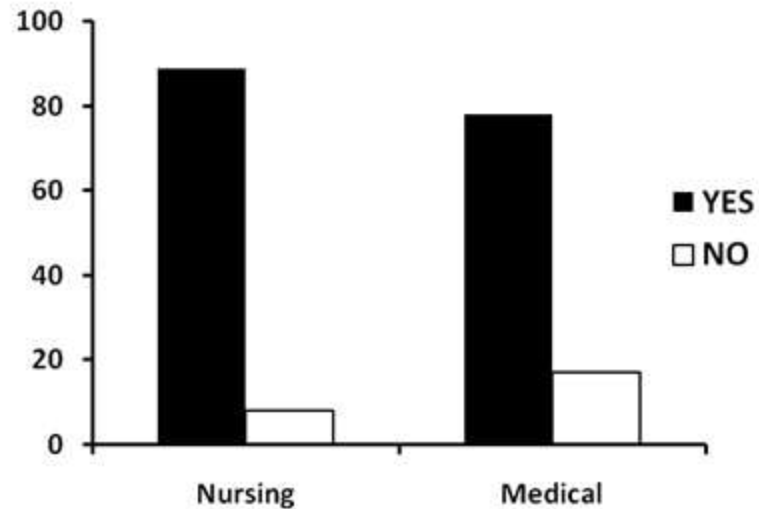
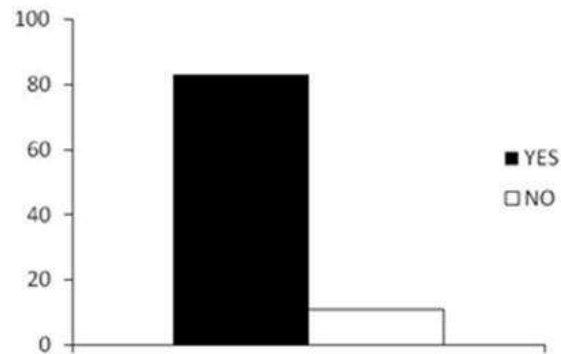
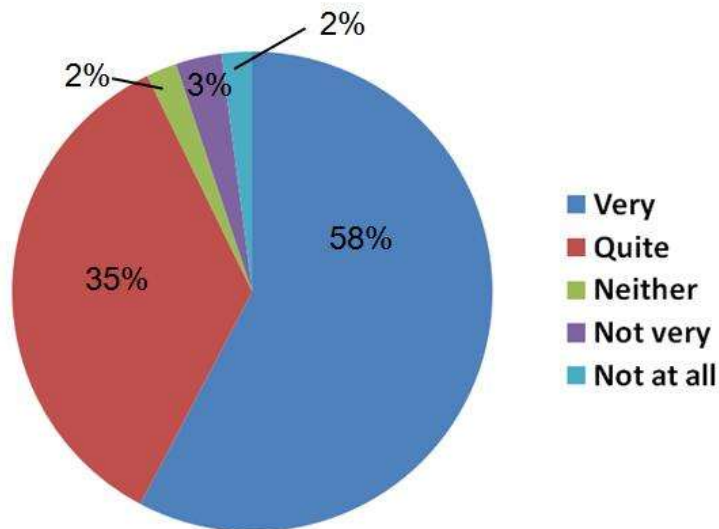


Figure 8 Leaving hospital

a) Did you feel ready to leave hospital when you were discharged?



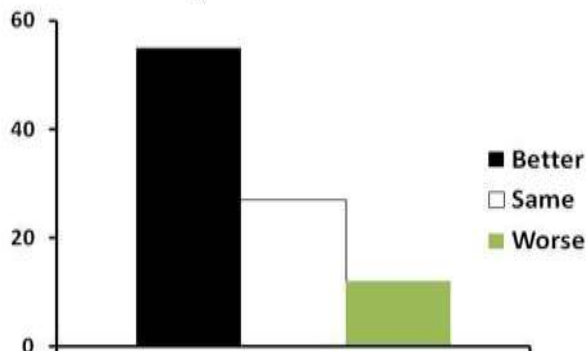
b) On leaving the hospital how satisfied were you with the overall experience during your admission?



- On leaving the hospital were you aware of the outcome of the procedure? Y=82; N=12

Figure 9 Since discharge

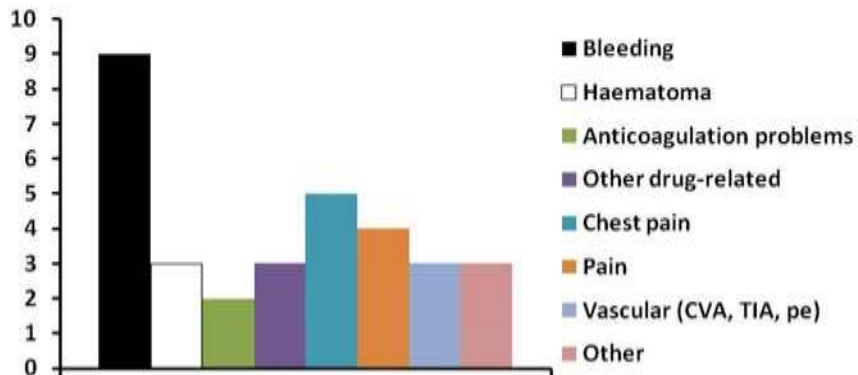
a) Since having your ablation, overall have you felt?



b) Have you had improvement in your....

	Yes	No	Not applicable
a) palpitations	59	18	20
b) breathless	34	27	35
c) fatigue	36	31	29
d) chest pain	24	11	58
e) dizziness	29	16	51

c) Did you have any complications after you went home as a result of your procedure?

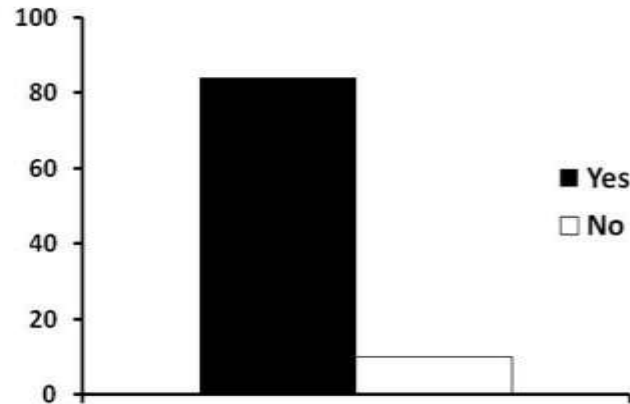


> 30% perceived a complication



Figure 10 Overall AF ablation experience

a) Overall if a friend or relative also suffered from your condition, would you recommend an ablation procedure to them?



b) Would you recommend **The Heart Hospital** to them as a place to have this procedure done?



KEY POINT SUMMARY

- Good response rate (64%) – representative
- OPA/pre-assessment performance good but only 53% given written info.
- 79% rated cath lab experience as good/excellent
- Reasonable access to staff post-procedurally
- 97% pts felt quite/very satisfied with overall experience
- 89% would recommend an AF ablation to a friend/relative
- 96% would recommend The Heart Hospital

And yet.....



THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE

- 1/3 pts found procedure very different than expected
- 2/3 pts experienced pain during ablation
- > 50% felt they could recall it in detail
- Almost 50% felt unwell after procedure
- >50% experienced pain/discomfort after procedure
- ~30% perceived a complication
- 13% reported feeling worse on returning home



Why the disparity?

INFORMED CONSENT!

- **Unrealistic patient expectations**
- **Inadequate communication**



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Improve the consent process**
- 2. Ensure the procedure is less unpleasant**



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

BEFORE PROCEDURE:

- Generate realistic expectations, including clearer explanation of normal vs. abnormal occurrences during and after procedure
- ?Consent in clinic and patient takes away copy
- Provide written information to ALL patients in OPA and pre-assessment



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

DURING THE PROCEDURE:

- Ensure tolerable as possible
- Tailored approach
- Liberal use of procedural analgesia and sedation

AFTER THE PROCEDURE:

- Improve communication
- Clear explanation of events and plans



LIMITATIONS

- Single centre ?can be extrapolated
- Questionnaire design
- Limited factual procedural information
- Qualitative/descriptive study
- No information on TOE

- GA cases: identified in 9 pts
 - 2 redo pts commented that better than first under LA
 - other problems inc. post-procedural pain etc were the same
 - 67% rated cath lab experience excellent (cf. 52% overall)
 - 89% rated cath lab experience good/excellent (cf. 79%)