

Survey of the patient experience in the emergency departments of Antrim Area Hospital & Causeway Hospital



Save The Mid

**November
2011**

Executive Summary

The survey of Antrim Area and Causeway Hospital A&E's took place over a 2 month period online. The survey has 34 responses as at the 23:00 13/10/11. The survey will remain live due to the recent uptake and a further report published at a later date.

Over this period there were 34 direct responses to the survey. Of those who responded, every individual had been a service user of the A&E departments.

Key issues for service users were: waiting times, laying on trolleys, that the A&E were in chaos, and cleanliness of the areas they were subject to.

There was a very low satisfaction within service users on their experience, with only 1 patient giving a top score of 10.

In February 2011 the Patient & Client Council published a similar report, in this report it had 10 respondents from Mid Ulster, this report has three times that number and hold more significance to the residents of Mid Ulster.

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Introduction

Save The Mid was formed in May 2010 following the shock decision to close the Mid Ulster A&E for reasons of health and safety. From this Save The Mid then went on to learn that a full stripping of acute services were imminent for the Mid Ulster Hospital and since then have lobbied every level of government to return services that were lost, or in the Health Minister, Edwin Poots words in June 2011 in the Assembly services that were “run-down”

Since May 2010 a Minor Injury unit has been in place at Mid Ulster Hospital which is open 9am to 5 pm weekdays, excluding bank holidays and weekends. There is still vast confusion on what services this unit can provide, as can be seen in the responses one health care worker who took her father to the unit for treatment, knowing what services were available was turned away from the Mid Ulster Minor Injury Unit and diverted to Antrim Area Hospital.

This report is to build upon a survey carried out by the Patient & Client Council during November 8th-9th & 20th-21st 2010. The Patient & Client Council set up a stall within the A&E department at Antrim Area Hospital yet only received 100 returns to their survey of which 5 were from Magherafelt and 5 from Cookstown.

The survey was created by Save The Mid and posted on Social networking sites, Facebook and Twitter, it received 34 responses.

1.0 Background and Purpose

1.1 Save The Mid

Save The Mid was formed to lobby for the return of acute services in Mid Ulster.

1.2 Purpose of Report

This report is to highlight patient experiences of A&E's at Antrim and Causeway, as patients are reluctant to complain directly to the Health Trust and the Patient & Client Council it was felt by Save The Mid that a third party survey would be needed to gain experiences. This report covered many aspects from waiting times to experience, each respondent was asked at the end to give a general comment.

We would like to take this moment to thank those who filled in the survey and apologise to those who have no internet access but can assure them that in due course a paper version will be published. Save The Mid are a Voluntary group and receive no donations to fund a large scale survey.

2.0 Methodology

The survey was created by Save The Mid and submitted to the web site Survey Monkey for distribution.

Survey Monkey give the option to lock IP addresses of computers to stop multiple entries for one computer, this option was removed due to the fact that some persons may be using public computers. A full IP address has been kept by Save The Mid, for reason of Data Protection; it is available on a paper copy to view in person.

3.0 Main Findings

3.1 Introduction

A total of 34 people filled out the survey, their responses are given in detail in Appendix 1, and not everyone filled in the general comments part but in most results on the table should add up to 34.

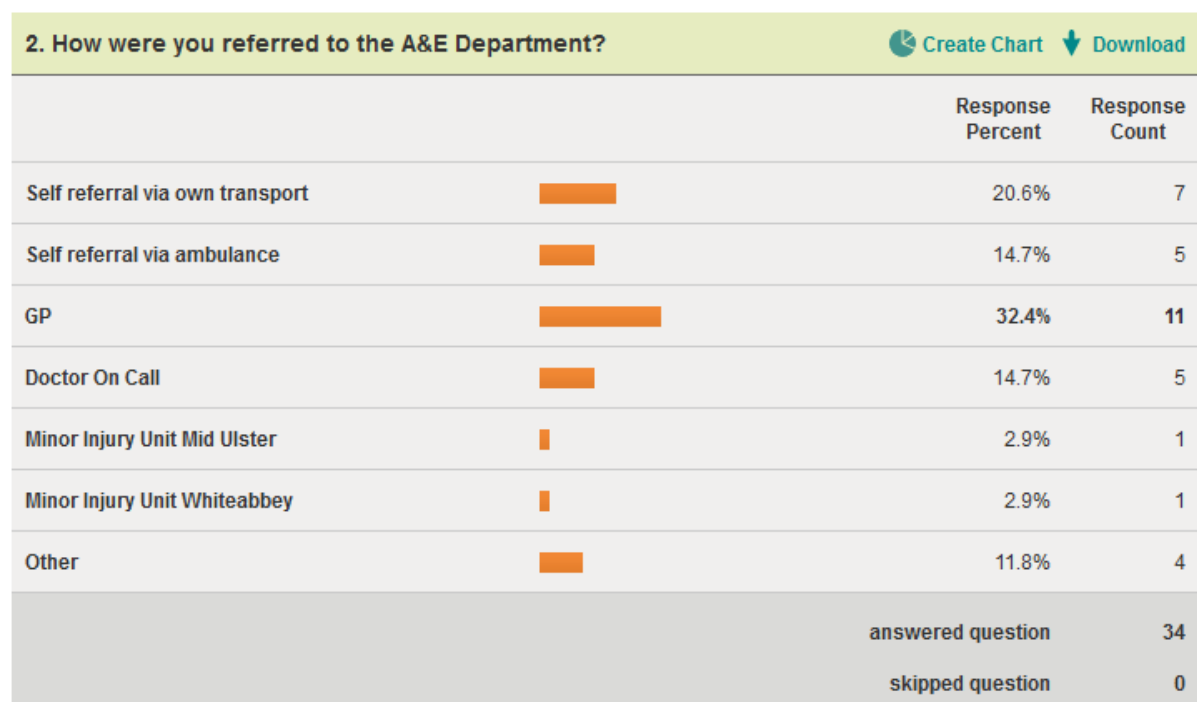
3.2 Information about respondents

Of the responses everyone but 1 respondent gave their council district, 1 patient gave the constituency residence, this is shown in the following table;

Cookstown District Council	19
Magherafelt District Council	11
Antrim District Council	1
Ballymoney District Council	1
Mid Ulster District Council	1
Ballymena	1
Total	34

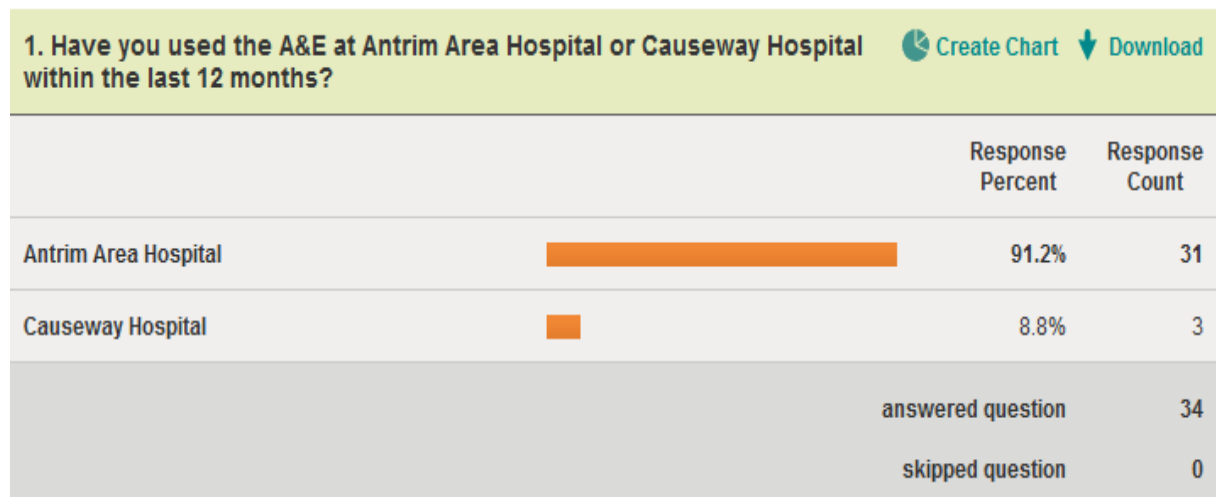
3.3 Referral

People were asked how they were referred to the Emergency Department, every respondent answered this question. In most 32.4% of patients were referred by a GP, secondly was self-referral via an ambulance which was 20.6%.



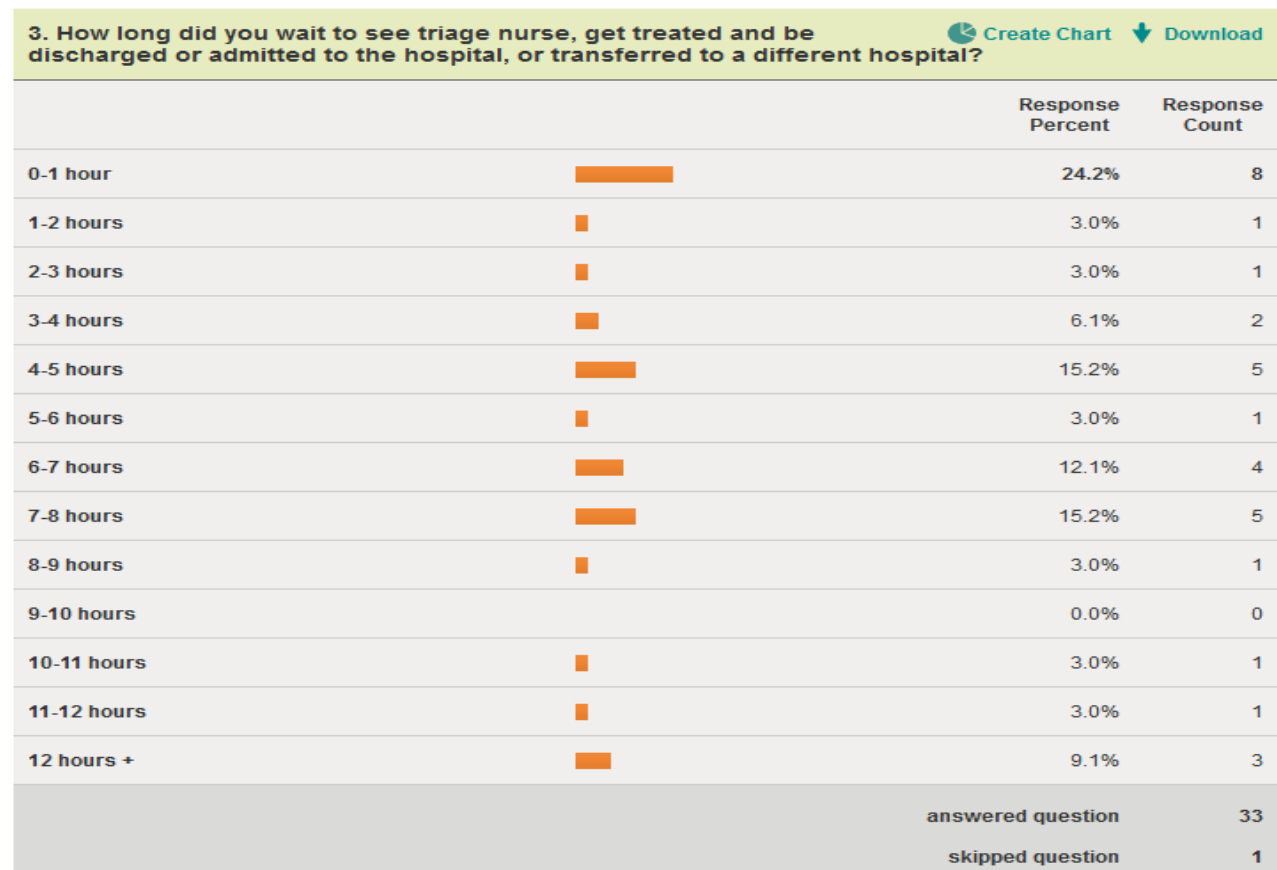
3.4 Hospital usage

According to the respondents, 91.2% used Antrim Area hospital, with 8.8% using Causeway, as shown below



3.5 Waiting Times

Respondents were asked “3. How long did you wait to see triage nurse, get treated and be discharged or admitted to the hospital, or transferred to a different hospital?” the results are shown in the table below.



3.6 Hospital transfers

Where applicable, respondents were asked to state which hospital they were transferred to, as shown in table below;

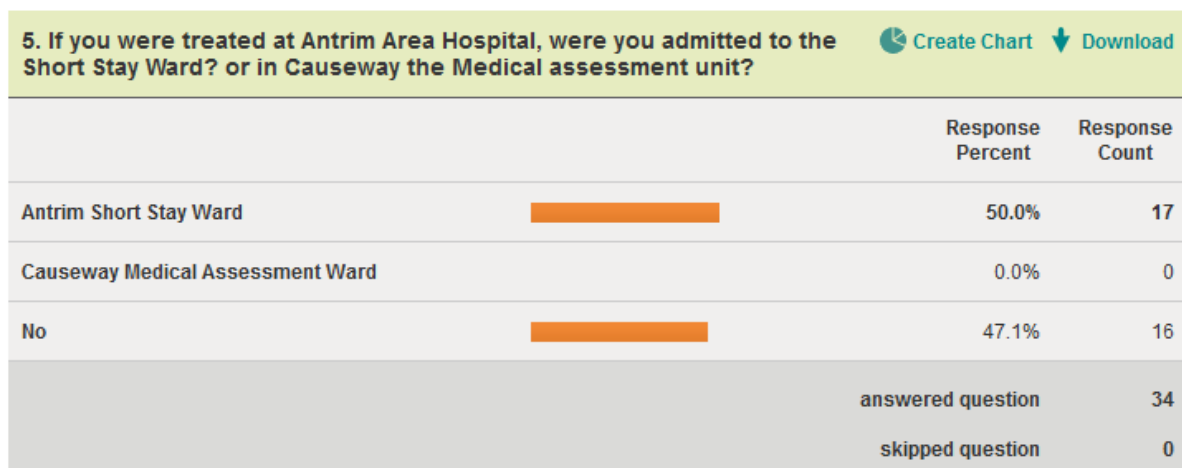
Royal Victoria Hospital	3 (includes 1 patient who was transferred 7 days after A&E)
Mid Ulster Hospital	1
Total	4

Two separate responses from patients were:

- *“Not transferred because no beds available in mid ulster hospital”*
- *“Was told i might have to be transferred to coleraine because there were no surgical beds available but one became available and i stayed in antrim.”*

3.7 Admittance to holding wards

Respondents were asked if they were admitted to the holding wards of Short Stay at Antrim or Medical Assessment in Causeway. A further 1 respondent stated in there general comment that they were admitted to short stay ward.



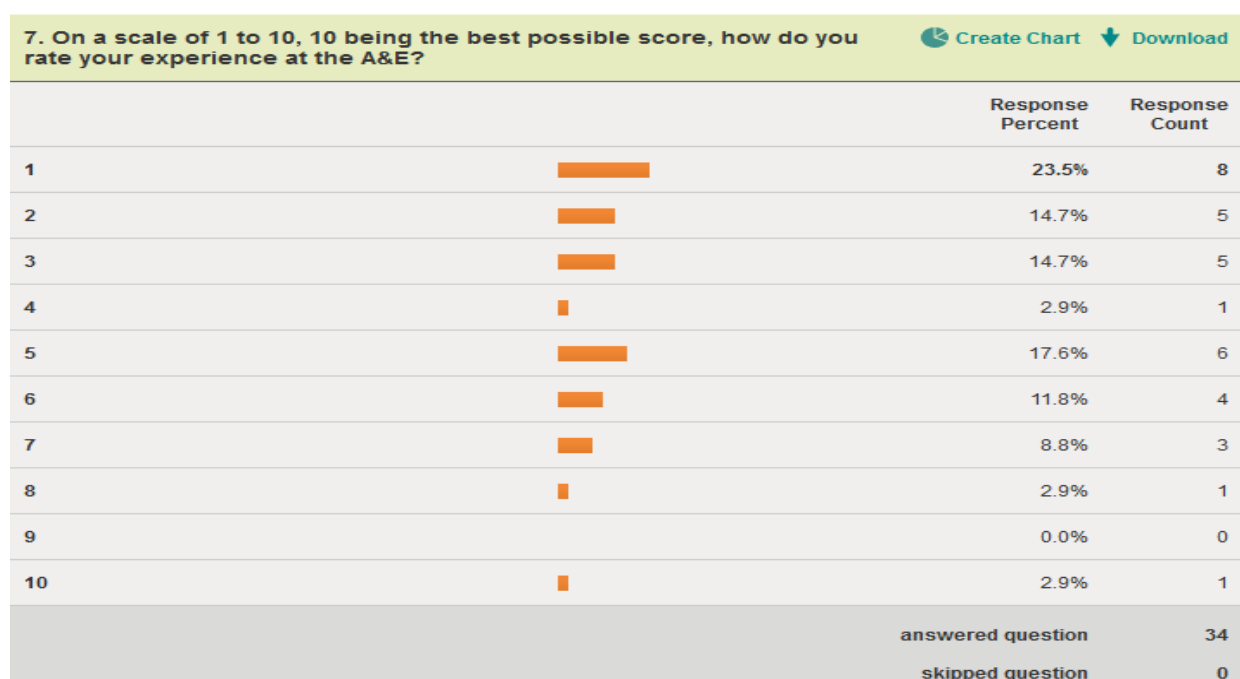
3.8 Time spent in holding ward

Response showed varying lengths of time in the holding wards, as shown below;

<i>Over night</i>
<i>8 hours</i>
<i>6 hours</i>
<i>12 hours</i>
<i>4 hours</i>
<i>7 to 8 hours</i>
<i>5 hours</i>
<i>1 hour</i>
<i>A few hours</i>
<i>Over night</i>
<i>2 hours</i>
<i>3 hours</i>
<i>4-5 hours</i>
<i>6+ hours</i>
<i>Overnight (causeway)</i>
<i>After 24hours on a trolley in A & E I was moved to a CHAIR in the short stay ward for 6 hours</i>

3.9 Rating of experience

Respondents were asked “7. On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the best possible score, how do you rate your experience at the A&E?”



4.0 General Comments

4.1 Introduction Responses, including general comment

The responses are as written by each respondent

	Hospital	Time Spent in A&E	Rating of experience 1 being lowest/10 being highest	Time spent in Short Stay ward (SS)/ medical assessment (ma)	Comment
1	Antrim	4-5 hours	6		
2	Causeway	11-12 hours	6	18 hours (ma)	
3	Antrim	12 hours +	3		
4	Antrim	0-1 hour	1	One night (ss)	
5	Antrim	10-11 hours	6	2 hours (ss)	
6	Antrim	8-9 hours	2	3+ hours (ss)	The experience was terrible - 90yrs old attending with broken arm and wrist - 9 hrs. of a wait in agony - only to find out 7 days later that it wasn't set right and had to turn round and drive to Royal for reset which took another 7 hrs. !!!!!
7	Causeway	0-1 hours	10		
8	Antrim	7-8 hours	1		Wait too long. Misdiagnosed. A&E waiting Area filthy as was clinical assessment area.
9	Antrim	0-1 hour	10mins	3	Although my child didn't have to wait long as the children's ward were aware she was coming, it was obvious to me that the A&E and the short stay wards were beyond manic and completely overcrowded. Frail and very ill looking people on trolley beds in the corridors etc., it was blatant to me and actually quite shocking to witness. The staff although doing their best visibly were under severe pressure to cope with the volume of people needing seen to. The setup in itself is an accident waiting to happen.

	Hospital	Time Spent in A&E	Rating of experience 1 being lowest/10 being highest	Time spent in Short Stay ward (SS)/ medical assessment (ma)	Comment
10	Antrim	7-8 hours	1	27 hours (ss)	This hospital is appallingly overcrowded, patients having to spend the night on trolleys in corridors and even on chairs. The experience was quite dreadful.
11	Antrim	12 hours +	1		After 24hours on a trolley in A & E I was moved to a CHAIR in the short stay ward for 6 hours
12	Antrim	6-7 hours	1		Absolutely horrible that a bed was wasted because of a signature. also as im on a low income and don't drive it cost a small fortune for transport , child-minding etc.
13	Causeway	0-1 hour	5		
14	Antrim	12 hours +	1	6+ hours (ss)	It was a terrible experience. Was admitted after being in a serious car accident. Was left for hours on a trolley with no medical attention or a drink of water. Staff was rough with me (I had broken bones) Doctor who treated me was very rude. My x-rays were misread! I was meant to be transferred to the RVH at 11pm on the night i was brought into A&E i didn't get to the RVH until 9am the next morning! Terrible place! I would get treated better in a war zone area!
15	Antrim	4-5 hours	1	4-5 hours	bring back magherafelt mid ulster hospital and a&e
16	Antrim	0-1 hour	7	3 hours (ss)	The staff were lovely but you could tell they were all very much under staffed
17	Antrim	6-7 hours	5		Staff were very pleasant but felt for those patients who had came from further afield than Antrim on their own and had been waiting longer than us specially the elderly. It's a long time to wait but to be on your own, surrounded by strangers and in pain cannot be pleasant...

	Hospital	Time Spent in A&E	Rating of experience 1 being lowest/10 being highest	Time spent in Short Stay ward (SS)/ medical assessment (ma)	Comment
18	Antrim	3-4	4	2 hours (ss)	Same doctors and nurses were trying to work with different patients at the same time, which led to breakdown in communication. It didn't help when a drunken man confronted a nurse while I was lying beside a elderly woman. It was quite scary and it deeply distressed me as if I hadn't enough to deal with. Very overcrowded, people laying on trolleys and I was thinking how have we reached this stage. I spoke to a couple of people and some had been waiting 12 to 16 hours to be seen. As my G.P. referred me quickly because of my symptoms, I could have waited all night, as I have done on previous occasions. It's not the staffs fault, they are overloaded with patients.
19	Antrim	4-5 hours	5		Referred by police for a child in harm, when we got there no one knew about the referral. After waiting to go into the a&e she was placed inside one of the cubicals, there was no bed, there were seats where other sick children were at with their parents. A couple of toys were sharing a trolley with medical equipment. She was examined in the photo copying room, sent back to the seats of the cubical for another few hours. Then taken to the office in the short stay ward to see doctor again as there was no room in the A&E, had to wait at the seat outside the short stay ward for 2 hours until finally having the child admitted. It is an absolute disgrace that a child who was emotionally and medically suffering was treated in this manner
20	Antrim	4-5 hours	2	Over night (ss)	i was put in a bay with an elderly lady who proceeded to remove her clothes i had to keep getting out of my bed to cover her up as there were three teenage boys using their phones and pointing them at her .,when i said to the nurse about this i was moved to another area which i can only say was not designed to hold beds as there were no alarms in the room.it would have been better if they had moved the old lady to a safer area

	Hospital	Time Spent in A&E	Rating of experience 1 being lowest/10 being highest	Time spent in Short Stay ward (SS)/ medical assessment (ma)	Comment
21	Antrim	0-1 hour	6	Few hours (ss)	
22	Antrim	n/a	2	3 hours	
23	Antrim	2-3 hours	3	Hour	to many patients can't cope
24	Antrim	7-8 hours	3		staff fantastic just time waiting
25	Antrim	4-5 hours	5		As i was a health care worker my-self and i knew the hospital system i knew were i could access drinks of water or juice, for my elderly father who has vascular dementia. As staff were under a lot of pressure and stress with the amount of patients arriving at A+E. I felt it was like a cattle market or organised chaos .My father was sent for a scan as he had hit his head we had to bypass mid-ulster were we went first and they have a scanner but because of the new rule layed out by the N.H.T. the journey on to Antrim caused my father more stress as i know due to experience with working with him. Stress regarding my father's condition can have an effect on his behaviour which can make him aggressive, FOOD needs to be provided to people waiting more than four hours, or at least be able to be purchased the staff need to be more aware of the conditions they are dealing with. He went there with a physical condition i.e.: minor head injury which i felt could have been treated in mid-ulster hospital which was a scan.
26	Antrim	1-2 hours	8	5 hours	
27	Antrim	7-8 hours	2	7-8 hours	Not only was I and a 4 year old kept waiting for this length of time, but it was also blocking a bed for another child that may have possibly been ill, when it was determined that my little boys illness wasn't serious we should have been discharged instead of being kept there until after 1 in the morning, it was ridiculous!

	Hospital	Time Spent in A&E	Rating of experience 1 being lowest/10 being highest	Time spent in Short Stay ward (SS)/ medical assessment (ma)	Comment
28	Antrim	6-7 hours	1	4 hours (ss)	Disgrace! Magherafelt sitting empty! Disgusting!!!!
29	Antrim	6-7 hours	2	12 hours (ss)	
30	Antrim	3-4 hours	5		<p>Was waiting in minor injuries reception 3-4 hrs. then taken to majors for approx. 1hr then to a ward c6 where i spent last night after having an operation, the staff were brilliant but seemed to be under severe pressure.</p> <p>They were understaffed and overworked think some measures need to be taken to ease the congestion before something serious happens and the staff get blamed.</p>
31	Antrim	5-6 hours	5	6 hours (ss)	2 many to deal with down there, may be a little under staffed
32	Antrim	0-1 hour	7	8 hours (ss)	Seen a doctor right away but had to wait eight hours before I could leave and only because I was lying on a trolley bed waiting on a dr to come back to discharge me. I had to ask nurse to check if I could go home as i needed no further treatment
33	Antrim	0-1 hour	7	Overnight (ss)	
34	Antrim	7-8 hours		3	The staff are working with more people and less staff they r working to the best of their ability i believe i would have been admitted but there was no beds and lady had been sitting waiting on a bed for 5 hours as she taking a stroke she was sitting on a hard plastic chair in a hallway. i then had to come and complete tests a few weeks later and my results showed i had taking a stroke i believe if i had been admitted and dealt with a lot of health problems would have been discovered sooner magherafelt a and e needs to return 2 full service to take the pressure off

5.0 Conclusion

The results of this survey indicate that service users of the A&E at Antrim Area Hospital are in general very dissatisfied. The survey also highlights several instances of welfare of patient's, dignity for the sick, and respect of the elderly.

This report shows opposite results in that were gained through the Patient & Client Council in 2010 and leads to the recommendation that if government bodies want to directly survey patients that they need to research new methods.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Patient & Client Council recommendations

Below are recommendations cited on Page 28 of the Patient & Client Survey, in red are comments and recommendations from Save The Mid;

- The Trust works in partnership with service users to address the recommendations outlined.
- The Trust should review communications at every stage of the patient journey.
- There is a need to address waiting times, at the very least to keep people better informed; the screen showing waiting times should be updated at regular intervals (at least every hour).
- The self-select procedure is not understood by a majority of patients: the Trust needs to find a way to communicate this procedure better so that patients will know what it means.
- The Trust should consider how waiting areas could be improved in terms of seating, facilities and location.
- The Trust should review compliance with policies and procedures relating to hand-washing.

6.2 Further recommendation's from Save The Mid

- As of yet the Trust have yet to approach community groups to address these issues. There is also a joint venture from the Northern Trust and Patient & Client Council for a Mid Ulster Health forum outstanding. Save The Mid recommend that this forum be established at it's soonest convenience.
- It is clear from the response that there is still little organisation with the A&E at Antrim, Save The Mid recommend that Health bodies above the Northern Trust address this issue as a matter of urgency.
- There is a need to address waiting time, a screen to inform you of your waiting time while honourable does not speed up the treatment process. The waiting times are due to the inability of Antrim A&E to meet the demands that it is placed under. Save The Mid recommend introducing services back into the Mid Ulster Hospital site.
- Save The Mid recognise new seats in the waiting area at reception, we also recognise and object to a filing cabinet being placed in the children's area, and recommend that it removed. We also recommend that the use of seats outside the short stay ward at Antrim to be removed as sick patients are expected to remain here for several hours. We also recommend that a ban be put in place in using A&E cubicles as shared seating areas for sick patients. There is a real risk of an outbreak of hospital acquired infections due to so many patients being in close proximity to each other.
- Mid Ulster to have services in terms of extended minor injury/A&E/inpatient ward beds/high dependency unit reintroduced.
- That the NHSCT be made include time spent in Short Stay ward as time spent in A&E.