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1. Introduction
Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) funds and buys health services on behalf of everyone living in Oxfordshire. To do this successfully OCCG needs to work with local people, Oxfordshire GPs, hospital clinicians, community healthcare and other partners including local government and the voluntary sector.

2. Background:
The Central Southern Commissioning Support Unit (CSU) adopted the national Choose well campaign as the key theme building on the work its predecessor Oxfordshire PCT had done previously. The CSU team made good use of existing collateral as well as developing a range of communications tools to reach target audiences.

3. Purpose of the Choose well campaign:
The purpose of the campaign was to encourage people to use the various NHS services appropriately and responsibly. By making people aware of the various options available to them the intention was to dissuade people from using A&E as a default service for their healthcare needs.

When people Choose well they:

- Get the right care, the first time
- Are often being treated more quickly than waiting in A&E
- Make it easier for emergency departments to treat people with life threatening conditions

4. First Public Survey ‘How do you access health care in Oxfordshire’:
During October-December 2013, an online and hard copy questionnaire asked for responses regarding how people access health care in Oxfordshire.

The on-line survey was completed by 200 respondents and 150 respondents filled out hard copies. The analysis of the survey findings can be viewed on the Talking Health section on the OCCG’s website, please visit http://bit.ly/1nnvt7s to read the report.

5. Second follow-up survey ‘How do you access health care in Oxfordshire’:
A second survey was run between May-July 2014, asking initially the same questions as the first survey in order to gauge if there had been any change in knowledge levels or attitudes regarding Choose well.
The on-line survey was completed by 182 respondents, analysis of the survey findings are outlined below:

1. **Do you know what NHS 111 is?**
   The majority of patients 95% stated that they were aware of NHS 111 and 5% were not aware of this service.

2. **Have you heard of the NHS Choose well campaign?**
   38% of patients had heard of the Choose well campaign but the majority 62% had not heard of it.
3. **Are you registered with a local GP practice?**
   100% of patients said they are now registered with a GP practice. This is a 5% increase compared to the first survey.

4. **Is it easy to get an appointment with your GP?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60% (110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>40% (72)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   60% of patients confirmed that it was easy to get an appointment with their GP, but 40% reported that they found it difficult to get one.

5. **What sort of health conditions/complaints would you visit your GP for?**
   Below are some patients’ comments:
   - “Manic depression.”
   - “Anything causing a raised temperature for more than a day or two.”
   - “Raised blood pressure and cholesterol.”
   - “Infection that requires prescribed medicine for example chest infection.”
   - “Something that has either not been responding to home/chemist treatment or is acute.”
   - “Any complaint that was unlikely to improve without intervention, but not urgent enough for immediate hospital care.”

6. **What do you do if you cannot get an appointment with your GP?**
   Below is a snapshot of some of the respondent’s comments:
   - “I usually wait until I get one or go to the Pharmacy.”
• “I am pleased to report that I have not experienced this situation over recent years. This is due to my lifestyle not generating the need, planning ahead and using the online booking system for my practice.”

• “See another GP at the practice or ask for a phone consultation with my GP.”

• “If it can wait, I would self-medicate. If not I would go to my local Pharmacy or MIU.”

• “I normally get an appointment within a week. If my complaint was urgent but not an emergency I would call NHS 111.”

• “Agree to see first available GP whether they know me or not or ask for a telephone consultation.

7. Have you visited A&E (Emergency Department) in the past 12 months?

![Bar chart showing 20% of patients visited A&E and 80% did not]

20% of patients reported that they had visited A&E in the past 12 months (which was a 4% increase compared to the first Choose well survey which ran from October-December 2013) and 80% used alternative services.

-5-
8. Did you consider another option before visiting A&E (e.g. seeing your GP)?

There was an encouraging increase of the number of respondents who would consider another option before visiting A&E an increase from 55% (from the first survey in 2013) to 74% and 26% of patients confirmed that they had not.

9. Please could you tell us why you did not use an alternative service to A&E?

Below are some reasons:

- “Distance to travel.”
- “I was advised by NHS 111 to go to A&E as it was after hours and they felt the injury warranted A&E.”
- “The severity of the pain, you cannot explain this over the telephone.”
- “The injury was more serious than could be treated by a GP It required x-ray photography for diagnosis.”
- “NHS 111 contacted the ambulance service.”
- “It was a bank holiday and 111 were unable to provide appropriate help so went to A&E.”
10. **Under what circumstances do you think someone should visit A&E?**

   Below are some of the respondent’s comments:
   
   - “In an emergency only.”
   
   - “If someone has had an accident which is life threatening or can only be treated at A&E and where time is the essence to avoid pain or further complications or death.”
   
   - “If they are frightened about their health situation and feel they need immediate help, support and reassurance.”
   
   - “Broken bones, head injuries, severe bleeding or breathing difficulties.”
   
   - “Trauma and injury that cannot be managed at home.”
   
   - “A serious health problem.”

11. **Do you know what a Minor Injuries Unit is?**

   ![Minor Injuries Unit Poll Results]

   Although there was only a 1% increase for both options (90% in the first survey) this is reassuring to note that patients are getting more aware of this service.

12. **Is there a Minor Injuries Unit near you – if so which one is it?**

   This question was answered 166 times and most respondents were aware of their local MIU. Other answers included:
   
   - “I do not think so unless it is the facility at Bicester hospital but maybe there will be a more well-known facility in the future when Bicester hospital is completed.”
• “No first aid unit only open 18-23 week days and 8.30-23.00 weekends but no x-ray, nearest MIU is Witney 20 miles away.”

• “Not sure possibly within A&E.”

• “I think there is one in Abingdon, but I do not consider that near enough to go to.

• “The nearest is Abingdon, but it is not ear and take a long time to reach by public transport (hourly buses and a long journey), and no parking if you drive.”

• “Not that I am aware of.”

13. Have you ever used the Minor Injury Unit service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>47% (78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>53% (87)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the respondents 53% had not used this service but 47% said that they had.

14. If so, what illness or injury did you have?
Below is a snapshot of the 86 respondent illnesses or injuries reported:

• “My wife’s minor burn to her leg from a spilled hot drink.”

• “A fractured wrist.”

• “Long wooden splinter under my fingernail.”

• “Fish hook in my ankle.”

• “My child had been bitten by an animal.”
15. Do you ever visit your chemist (pharmacist) other than to get a prescription?

It was encouraging to note that 69% of respondents visit their pharmacist for additional items other than prescriptions and 31% do not use this service. Below are some patients’ comments:

- “For advice on back and ear problems.”
- “To seek advice on rashes, verrucae’s etc.”
- “Pharmacists have a wider knowledge of drugs and their usage.”
- “For advise on minor things such as over the counter medicines.”
- “To get medication not on prescription and to check that the medication does not clash with medication already taken. I also had a medication check with the Pharmacist.”
- “To get advice on the choice of wound dressings.”
16. **Do you have any of the following in your first aid kit/medicine cabinet?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>plasters, in a variety of different sizes and shapes</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>(179)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small, medium and large sterile gauze dressings</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>(137)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at least two sterile eye dressings</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>(36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>triangular bandages</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>(85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safety pins</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>(140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disposable sterile gloves</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>(95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweezers</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>(145)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>(159)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alcohol-free cleansing wipes</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sticky tape</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>(133)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thermometer, preferably digital</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>(132)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skin rash cream such as hydrocortisone or calendula</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>(116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cream or spray to relieve insect bites and stings</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>(133)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>antiseptic cream</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>(150)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painkillers such as paracetamol (or infant paracetamol for children)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aspirin (not to be given to children under 16), or ibuprofen</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>(171)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cough medicine</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>(108)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>antihistamine tablets</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>(104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distilled water, for cleaning wounds and as an eye bath</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>(44)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was interesting to note that the following were the highest items reported that respondents had in their first aid kit/medicine cabinet:

- Plasters, in a variety of different sizes and shapes
- Painkillers such as paracetamol (or infant paracetamol for children, aspirin (not to be given to children under 16), or ibuprofen
- Scissors
- Antiseptic cream
- Tweezers

17. Have you ever rung a helpline for medical advice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53% (96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>47% (86)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 53% of the respondents had rung a helpline for medical advice whereas 47% had not.

18. Have you ever used the internet (e.g. google) to help diagnose and illness or complaint?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75% (135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25% (45)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly 75% had used the internet to help them to diagnose an illness or complaint.
6. Key Findings:

The survey attracted 182 responses. The initial survey had 305 responses but it ran for a much longer period.

The later survey showed awareness had reduced in some areas but this may be due to the fact the second survey was run in summer, after the main campaign had been finished for a few months and also the profile of Choose well had reduced in terms of advertising and media.

The number of respondents who had heard of NHS111 was the same in both surveys at 95%

However there was a fall in the numbers of people who were aware of Choose well from 44% in the winter survey to 38% in this one.

All respondents in this survey were registered with a GP compared with 95% in the earlier study but only 60% found it easy to get an appointment whereas the figure was 67% before.

There was an increase in the number of people who had visited A&E (up from 16%) but 74% had considered an alternative option first whereas in winter only, 55% had done so.

Slightly more people know what an MIU was (91% as opposed to 90%) and 47% had used one with the earlier figure being 43%

A total of 69% visited a pharmacist for reasons other than getting a prescription according to this survey with the numbers in the previous study being 64%. The qualitative data suggests that most of these pharmacy visits were for expert advice.

Just 53% of respondents in this survey rang a helpline (54% last time) and 75%, as opposed to the earlier number of 77%, had searched the internet to look up symptoms.

Although in some respects the responses do not show a significant shift in awareness of Choose well or a reduction in the number of visits to A&E the timing of the second survey when Choose well was not being promoted may have had an impact.

It is also unknown how many people did not visit A&E as a result of the Choose well campaign and the fact significantly more people considered another option before going to A&E is encouraging.