

Wondering about your hospital's quality? Ask a nurse

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Research finds they have accurate insights into level of care provided.

(HealthDay)—The easiest way to assess a hospital's quality of care might be to just ask the nurses, new research suggests.

One reason nurses tend to have accurate perceptions about quality of care in the hospital where they work is that they are on the front lines and are most familiar with the daily experiences of their patients, researchers from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing pointed out.

"For a complete picture of [hospital performance](#), data from nurses is essential," the study's lead author, Matthew McHugh, a [public health policy](#) expert at Penn Nursing, said in a university news release. "Their assessments of quality are built on more than an isolated encounter or

single process—they are developed over time through a series of interactions and direct observations of care."

The study, which looked at the relationship between hospitals known for nursing excellence and reports from nurses on [hospital quality](#), involved more than 16,000 nurses from nearly 400 hospitals in California, Florida, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The nurses' perceptions of quality accurately reflected hospital outcome measures, such as complications after surgery and patients' views on the level of their care. And, the researchers found, more nurses working in hospitals known for outstanding care and quality reported their workplace had an excellent level of care.

"Obtaining information from nurses takes advantage of their unique perspective within the caregiving context," McHugh noted. "Nurses have insights—patient-provider interactions, integration of technology, patient and family education—that are not always documented in the [medical record](#) but often make the difference between good and bad outcomes".

The study authors pointed out that [health care quality](#) measures are used to craft health care policy and also influence insurance and improvement efforts.

"Although the patient's perspective is the most relevant quality-of-care indicator, nurse-reported quality of care is clearly a valuable indicator of hospital quality," McHugh concluded in the news release.

The study was released online in advance of publication in an upcoming print issue of the journal *Research in Nursing and Health*.

More information:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has more about

[health care quality measures.](#)

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