

Listening makes sense: understanding the experiences of older people and relatives using urgent care services in England

Adapted discovery interview transcript for Arthur West¹

My name is Arthur West and I am 77 years old. I live at home with my wife.

This month I have had to attend the A & E on two occasions and on both occasions I was kept in and sent to a ward. The second time I went in, I had pains in my chest and pains down my arm and it started in late evening, I thought by going to bed it would ease up and the next morning my wife said 'do you still have the pain'? I said I did and we discussed what we should do about it and she said, 'well the doctor said go back if you get pain after you have tried the spray'. We tried the spray and it didn't stop the pain but by golly it did have an effect on me, I staggered all over the place, I thought I was going to pass out, I couldn't keep my balance and my wife said to get my clothes on and get to the car and we will go the hospital. That was the right thing to do but my goodness, there was a queue of cars to get into the car park and in fact after being stuck in that queue and my wife driving, honestly I was in a great deal of discomfort and pain and I am pretty good with pain. Once we got into A&E I was taken to the reception and it was Murphy's law, there were a couple of ladies at the desk, one was occupied with a lady who was talking about her son, I don't know if he was ill he was running around like a lunatic and she was taking up the time of the receptionist, maybe I felt this because I was feeling poorly, the other lady who could have helped us couldn't because the computer had failed, so it was nobody's fault but when you feel that rotten and you feel that you might be having a heart attack,...eventually my wife spoke to the receptionist, I don't know what was said, but the lady went into a little room, came out with my records because I had been there only a few days previously and then someone called my name and I was taken round into the area the paramedics had taken me before and they started to work on me.

¹ All names have been changed

I saw a doctor who gave me a wonderful going over, I'm sure he does it with everyone but he made me feel special and that is what you need when you are feeling unwell and you get into A & E and you are in those cubicles and the doctor comes along to see you. If you feel that they are looking after you and they want to help you, this gives you a little extra confidence, I'm gonna get well, but sometimes obviously you can't get well but they give you that feeling that as far as they are concerned they are going to do as much as possible to help you. And so I had every confidence in this young fellow. After examining me and doing all the tests, they gave me injections into my stomach because of again, blood clots and chewing all the aspirins, he went off then came back to say ' we have got bed for you up in the heart section,' everything was arranged and I got admitted there.

Arriving on the ward was very professional, the bed was made up and everything was, you were put into your bed, they showed you how to lift yourself up, bring yourself down, all these things, the person who had the bed before me had ordered a meal so I had the meal that he was going to have, fine, all that went well.

We hear about all these terrible things that you can pick up bugs in hospitals and obviously umm, cleanliness, I saw something (giggle) the lady who runs the ward – a lovely jolly lady, her name was Miss Smith, she had a cleaner in his 60's he came round and sprayed the floor and cleaned and actually I had never seen this all the times I have been in hospital but she was talking to him and he came over with a type of duster and he cleaned the tops of the doors and I looked on in amazement and I thought blimey this is good!

More information on this research study can be found on:
www.city.ac.uk/listeningmakessense