

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

### **Adapted discovery interview transcript for Harriet White<sup>1</sup>**

I'm 78 and live at home with my husband. Four weeks ago, I injured my arms badly at home, called my husband and said 'I've had an accident I think you will have to take me to the hospital'. So we go straight there, and he drops me off at A&E and goes and parks the car. I was a little worried when he left me.

You see I am a very, very nervous person I used to be terrified of hospitals. I had my operation nine years ago and I am much less anxious now, but it is still there. I don't know why really. I can just remember feeling worried. I think it is because, he is always with me.

After I'd registered, I was glad when my husband came back, it was only about 10 minutes but it seemed longer. We waited in the waiting area. Then a sister came out, she called my name and came over and looked at my arms and said 'Yes lacerations', she gave me a pink plastic folder thing and told me to go to the urgent care centre to get them dressed. I had not heard of it before and she said it is through 2 sets of doors and then turn right and I can remember her saying it was by the lifts. I wasn't sure where she meant but we said OK and followed her instructions. To be honest we felt she was a bit sort of..... Well abrupt. It was her attitude you know. She didn't smile, didn't look at me or spend much time looking at my arms... really I suppose the word is sharp and really quick, she said go and get those dressed. Perhaps she had had a bad day, I don't know. I don't know. I may have felt upset if my husband wasn't with me. Put it this way I was glad she did not do my dressing.

I wouldn't want to complain about that though. I wouldn't wanted to have bothered anybody about something like that, people are far too busy and you have got to get on with it and not expect perfection...Oh no.

Next, we went to the first set of doors but we could not see how to open them, there was no button to press and there was no one around to ask so we just stood there for a bit, to see if someone came along. A man came out of a room at the side, he had a card around his neck and he put it in this thing on the side of the wall and let us in with him. I don't know if he was supposed to but that is the way she told us to go, but there were no signs for that centre. It was nice and bright in the A&E there but as I was walking through with all the nurses and doctors rushing about, I could see the

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<sup>1</sup> All names have been changed

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patients through some of the curtains that were open. I thought .gosh...I hope that MPA doesn't get into my raw arms, that bug that you get from hospitals. I read a thing in my magazine and it said it lives in hospitals. I wish I had put something over my arms really but I was afraid it would stick. I thought I should leave it to the experts.

Anyway we went as quickly as we could to the next door, my husband helped me. At the next door someone was just pressing the switch on the wall and we got out OK. We had to walk all through like a tea bar. I wondered if more people were looking at my arms, the one was dripping blood down my arm so I was glad when I saw the lifts and a sign saying that centre, it looked like it was where the blood tests are done. There wasn't anyone waiting so I went and knocked the door.

A sister came and said come straight in. She was a very very nice person. 'Oh dear me' she said, she sat me down, 'are you all right' she said, I said 'I am fine, I've just made a mess'. She asked me some questions about myself and then she told me she was going to deal with my arms. She got like tweezers and pulled all that skin back up to where it had been split, and pulled it all up, gently, gently just like magic she brought it all together, she was brilliant really good and so kind; she kept asking me if I was alright and if she was hurting me. She put paper stitches across so that it sealed it. She said to me that I had to keep the dressing dry and to come back to have it checked in a couple of days.

I felt really relieved at this stage. I was so worried they would have a job with my paper skin, it was so thin and it had gone back all the way up here. I didn't know how they were going to do that but they did.

I was worried about my shower though. How I was you know going to go into the shower with bandages on both my arms, how I was going to keep it dry. I can not go without my shower; I have got a real thing about having a shower every day. It is like a ritual in my house. I have to feel clean.

I wanted to talk about it with the nurse really but she had been so good and she had to spend such a long time, ohh..... over half an hour with me, sorting me out, gently, gently. I didn't think it was right to bother her any more, her time was precious she had probably got lots of things to do; I could hear people outside the room so I didn't want to take up more of her time ...she had done her bit and it was up to me to find a way to have a shower and keep it dry and that is what I did. So it was paper bags, polythene bags and cling film but it still got wet, so I think I went back three or four times to have the dressings changed . I went back to the same place. I didn't see that lady again, but I saw the other person twice, but they were brilliant however, you know so absolutely first class.

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