

Raising sustainability awareness in a dental teaching hospital: a quality improvement project

Background

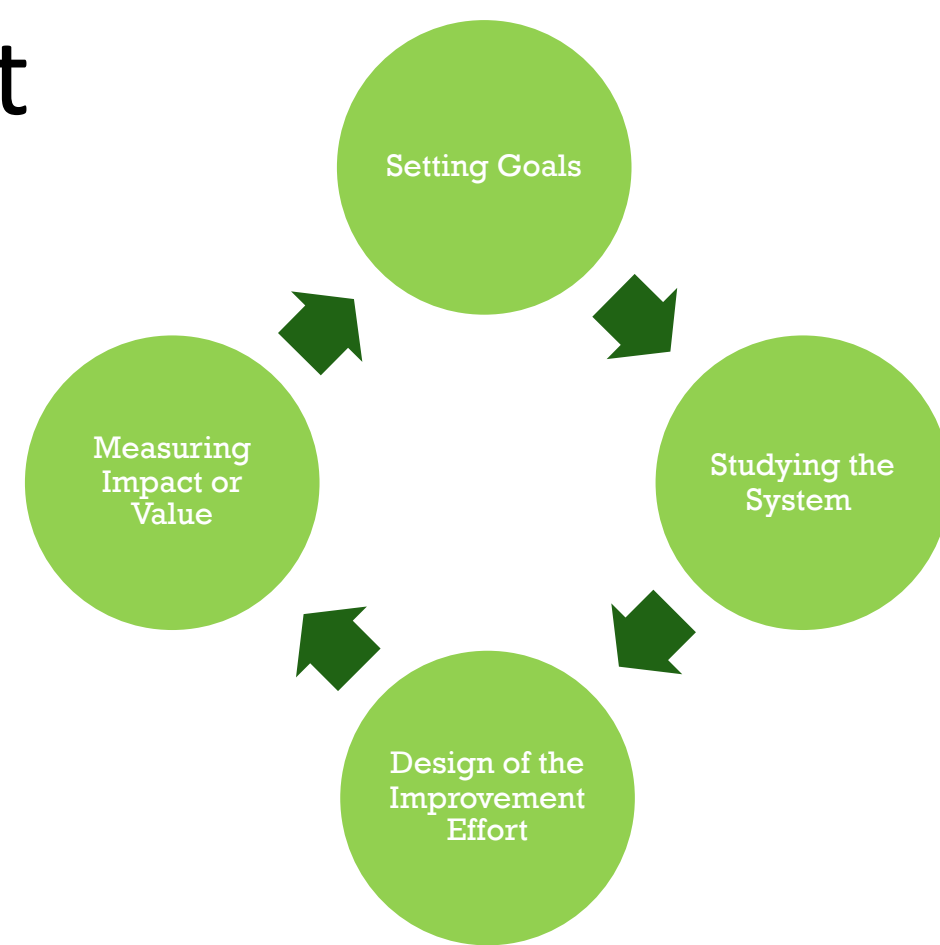
- The NHS has set a target to be the **world's first 'net zero'¹ national health service by 2040**. Dentistry contributes to **3% of the carbon footprint** in NHS England and this is not including the contribution from private practices
- As a profession we have a **social and ethical responsibility** to reduce our contribution towards this
- Within the **General Dental Council curriculum²**, there is currently **no specific requirement** to providing teaching on sustainable healthcare

Objective

To raise awareness of sustainable dental care in a teaching hospital among patients, staff and students

Methods

A multicomponent quality improvement project (QIP) was registered with the Clinical Effectiveness Library and conducted at the Royal London Dental Hospital. The QIP followed the Sustainability in Quality Improvement (SusQI) Framework³.



A sustainability event for staff and students was organised, hosting several exhibitors including DentAid and educational stands designed by dental students. The themes for the stands included; waste management, travel, reducing treatment needs through preventative practices and procurement.



Results

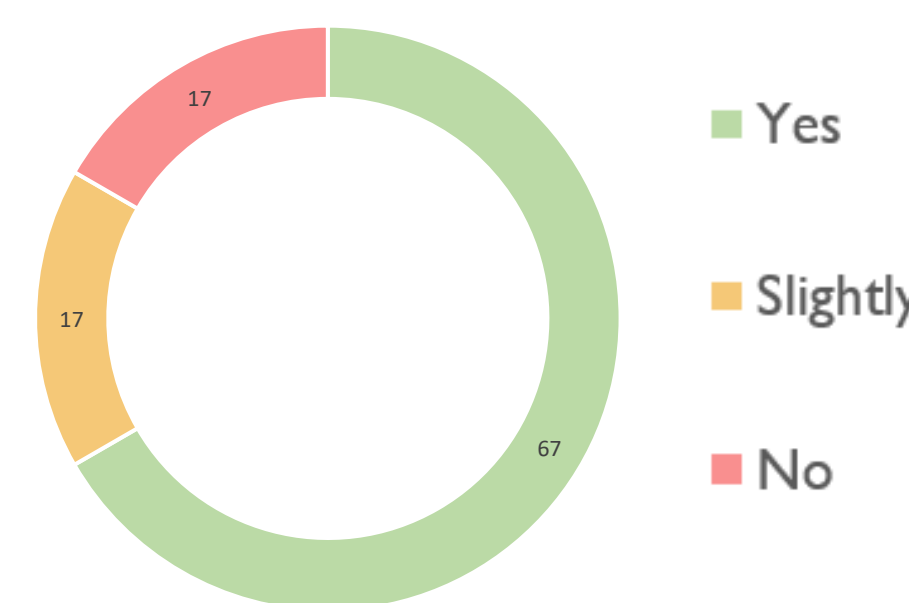
Patient Questionnaire:

Average age was 47 (18-80). The average distance travelled to appointment was 30km (2-144km).

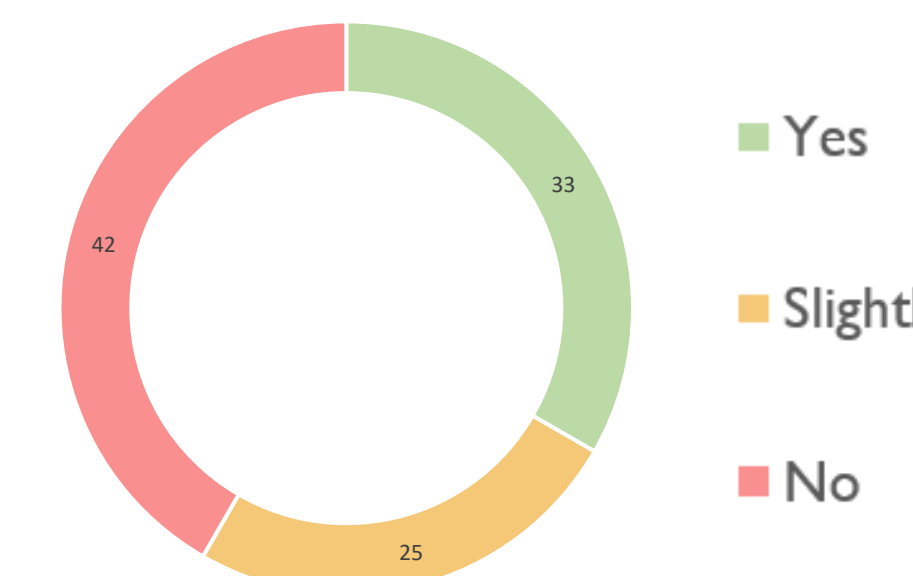
How do patients get to their appointment?



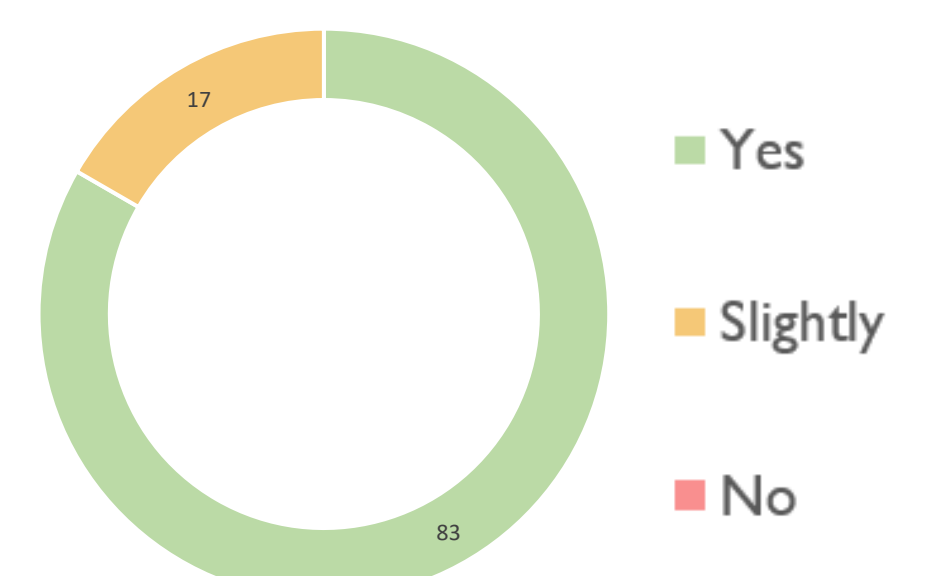
Are you aware of the environmental impact of your lifestyle?



Are you aware of the environmental impact of your dental treatment?



Would you care more for your mouth if you knew the environmental impact of dental treatment?



Sustainability Event:

- 150+** attendees; dentists, dental care professionals, medical staff, domestic staff and dental students
- 99%** of those who attended wanted futures sustainability events
- 97%** learnt something new about how their lifestyle impacts the environment
- 97%** of attendees felt motivated to adapt their lifestyles to be more sustainable

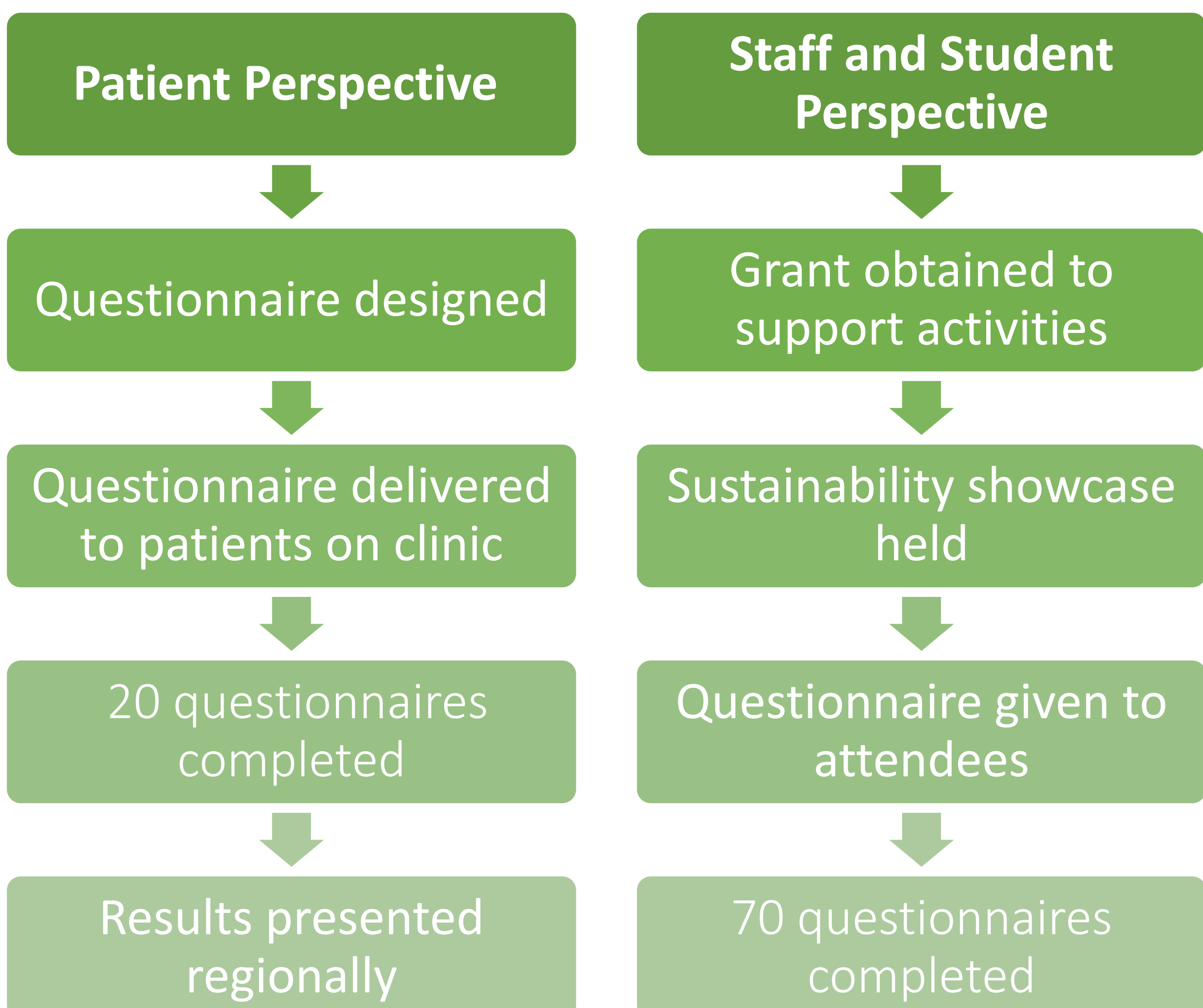


Conclusion

Patient awareness regarding the environmental impact of dental care was low however patients felt that having a better awareness would motivate them to reduce their oral health risk. A peer led extracurricular sustainability event was well received by attendees. This QIP emphasises the need to integrate sustainable dentistry into secondary care and educational settings.

Future directions

- Piloting of a patient information leaflet to increase awareness of environmental impact of dental care⁴
- Integration of sustainability into teaching
- Hosting future sustainability themed educational events



References:
1. NHS England. Delivering a 'net zero' National Health Service. 2020. Available from: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/green/nhs/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/10/delivering-a-net-zero-national-health-service.pdf>
2. GDC. Standards for education. 2015. Available from: <https://www.gdc-uk.org/docs/default-source/quality-assurance/standards-for-education-%28revised-2015%29.pdf>
3. Centre for Sustainable Healthcare. Sustainability in Quality Improvement 2020 Available from: www.susQI.org
4. Public Health England. Carbon Modelling in Dentistry. 2018. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/724777/Carbon_modelling_within_dentistry.pdf

