

Patient Power!

Engaging patients actively in their care can result in better health outcomes. But sometimes patients are hesitant to speak up. We trialled a behaviour change strategy to enhance the patient voice in early post-operative care.

THE STUDY



During a 5-month trial period, all patients who had joint replacement surgery at a hospital in Victoria, were provided with a specially-designed notepad.

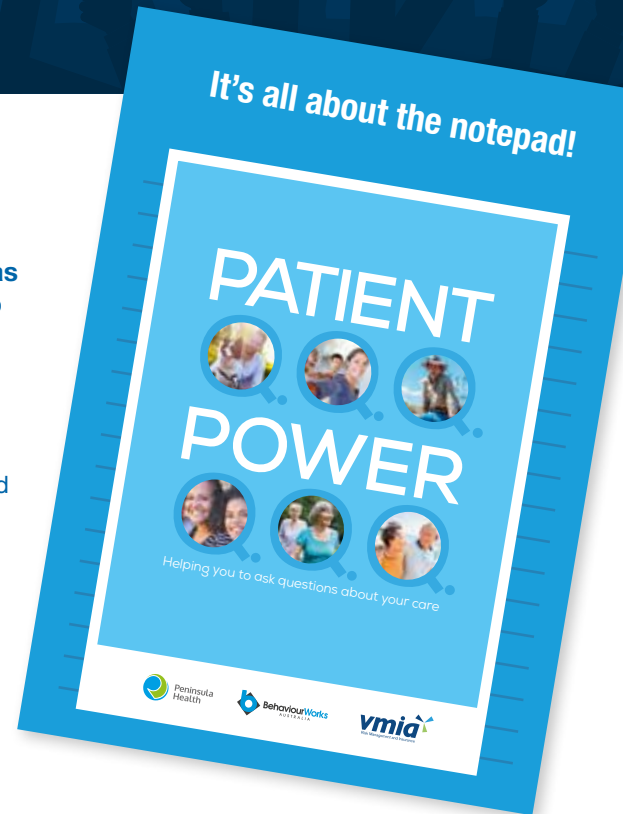
At discharge, patients returned their notepad and were invited to complete a survey.



At the conclusion of the trial, clinicians in the trial ward were asked about their impressions of the intervention.

While the notepad was originally designed to encourage patients to ask questions, it's clear that it did much more than this.

The notepads encouraged patients to think about and engage more in their care. They opened lines of communication with the healthcare team and they set an expectation that asking questions and speaking up is normal in the hospital setting.



THE RESULTS

- The notepad was used 90 times by 16 patients.
- It was used to ask questions, as a diary, to make comments and to provide feedback on care.
- The two largest categories of questions were related to in-hospital processes and recovery.

"It was quite powerful actually saying to them, 'We're wanting to encourage you to ask questions'."

— Clinician

"It opened up lines of communication."

"Helpful and very well set out."

"Pleasure to have the chance to use it."

— Patients

"When relatives come in after hours and they want to ask questions but the doctors aren't there, they can write it in the notebook."

— Clinician



WHAT'S NEXT?

"I think every patient should have [a notepad]!"

— Clinician



Investigate options for scalability.

Investigate e-devices rather than paper notepads to improve accessibility and remove language barriers.

