

# Family-Reported Experiences Evaluation (FREE) study: a mixed-methods study to evaluate families' satisfaction with adult critical care services in the NHS

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## Plain English summary

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# Plain English summary

## What was the problem/question?

To improve care in the NHS, the experiences of patients need to be fed back to the managers organising the care and the doctors and nurses providing the care. This is difficult for intensive care units (ICUs). Roughly one-quarter of the patients die. Few survivors remember their experiences. It is therefore important for family members to provide feedback on their satisfaction with the ICU.

## What did we do?

First, we adapted the Canadian Family Satisfaction in the Intensive Care Unit questionnaire for the UK. We checked if the questions were relevant, easy to understand and important to family members in the UK. We then invited over 12,000 family members (of adult patients staying 24 hours or more in 20 ICUs across the country) to complete the UK version of the questionnaire after their relative left the ICU.

## What did we find?

More than 7100 family members (close to 60%) filled in the questionnaire. The results showed that the questionnaire was useful in measuring family satisfaction. We also found that family members whose relative passed away were more satisfied with the ICU than family members whose relative survived.

## What does this mean?

Our version of the questionnaire could be used to measure family satisfaction in the future. However, more work needs to be done to make sure it picks up all the important details of family satisfaction. As so many people took part, we can now bring all of their information together (such as their age and how ill the patient was) to help improve family satisfaction in the ICU.

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