

Over half way!

With over **7,500** participants recruited, the FREE Study is now the **largest study** to evaluate the FS-ICU questionnaire!

Thank you to everyone for your on going support and hard work.



Top performers



Recruitment will continue to 30 June 2014 and we know you are all working hard to meet recruitment targets. We are aiming to recruit one or more (up to four) family members for at least 80% of patients who stay for 24 hours or more in the critical care unit. This is required to ensure that the study includes a representative sample of participants.

Overall the **top five** recruiting units are...

Barnsley Hospital

Darent Valley Hospital

Medway Maritime Hospital

Northampton General Hospital

South West Acute Hospital

Congratulations... but, the other units are not far behind...! Who will make it to the next edition of the newsletter...?

Prizes

Prizes for entering milestone participants (every 1,000) have gone to:

4,000

Manchester Royal Infirmary

5,000

St George's Hospital

6,000

Barnsley Hospital

7,000

Derriford Hospital



Why is FREE important?

The NHS is striving to be genuinely centred on patients and their carers. One important aspect in improving care in the NHS is to ensure that experiences of those receiving care are fed back directly to those organising and delivering care to ensure that patients and their family/loved ones have a positive experience of care. Nowhere is this more important than in critical care.

However, gaining insight from patients in critical care poses a challenge. Approximately one third of patients do not survive to leave hospital and those who do survive have little recollection of their experience, due to the nature of the treatment received.

There are however another group of individuals, namely family/loved ones, who play a vital role in support of patients. Family/loved ones' experiences of critical care, pertaining to their satisfaction with the quality of care provided both for those who survive and for those who do not, have not previously been requested with a view to improving critical care services in the NHS.

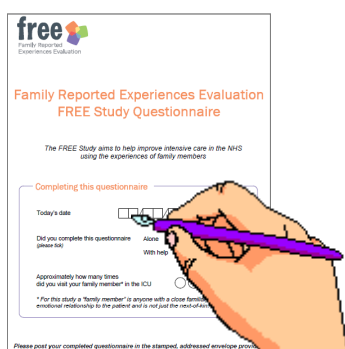
The FS-ICU is the most widely validated questionnaire to assess family satisfaction, measuring satisfaction with care and satisfaction with decision-making. We therefore want to find out how family members feel about their experiences of critical care and if this feedback can be routinely collected across the NHS, using the FS-ICU, to ensure that patients and their family/loved ones have a positive experience of care.

This study would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of everyone in the unit, including the research team, clinical and administrative staff. So again, a BIG THANK YOU to everyone involved!

Psychometric assessment of the FS-ICU questionnaire

The FS-ICU questionnaire was developed and validated in Canada. Cross-cultural validation and psychometric testing of the FS-ICU is required in the UK prior to incorporating routine surveys of family members into a quality improvement programme.

During the first stage of the FREE Study, a qualitative study (FREE-Qual) was conducted to test the face content validity and comprehensibility of the FS-ICU questionnaire. As part of this, interviews and focus groups were conducted with patients, family members and healthcare professionals. This led to some minor changes to the questionnaire.



Further psychometric evaluation of the FS-ICU was undertaken in October 2013 using data from a representative sample of family members, participating in the FREE Study, to assess whether further adaption of the FS-ICU questionnaire was required. The results of the psychometric analysis were reviewed by the FREE Study Management Group and it was agreed that the FREE Study should continue with no further changes to the FS-ICU questionnaire.

The psychometric analysis will be repeated using data from the full cohort of FREE Study participants at the end of the study.

Dates for your diary



6 February 2014

Monthly site teleconference, 12:30 - 13:30

3 April 2014

17th Annual Meeting of the Case Mix Programme,
London

*Come and say hello to the CTU team
at the CTU stand!*

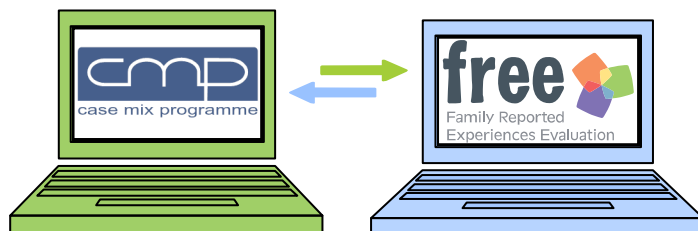
26 - 27 June 2014

UK Critical Care Research Forum,
Cardiff

Data linkage

We need to ensure that data collected for the FREE Study can be linked to data in the Case Mix Programme database for analysis.

We will be contacting you if we find incomplete matches – i.e. if patient details cannot be matched on key identifiers – for your help to identify and correct any errors.



Reminders and Tips

- Continue to encourage staff to keep Activity Logs updated for all patients who have stayed 24 hours or more. Some units have found it useful to print the Activity Logs on brightly coloured paper.
- Screening patients daily - highlighting those who currently have no family members recruited may help to prioritise participants to be approached. This may help boost recruitment rates and ensure representation.
- Several sites have reported a boost in recruitment by following up family members, who visited ICU, when the patient has been moved onto the ward.
- Please ensure data are entered on the FREE Study secure web portal as soon as possible to ensure that questionnaires are posted to participants on time.
- Keep FREE a priority on the ICU by having the FREE Study Poster and Participant Information Sheets visible in the relatives' room.
- A regular email to all unit staff, to provide study updates and information, may help raise awareness of the study and maintain motivation.

Contact us

The FREE Study Team

Email: free@icnarc.org

Tel: 020 7269 9277

Fax: 020 7831 6879

