

1. Introduction

In the period December 2016 – January 2017 SGE international (SGEi) in Eindhoven conducted a survey of all patients registered at its centre. The survey was developed for SGEi by the network Healthcare for internationals (H4i), a non-profit network of healthcare providers that aims to have Dutch healthcare better meet the needs and expectations of internationals. Invitations were sent by SGEi and analysed by H4i. The responses cannot be traced back to individual persons, with the exception of those persons that chose to provide their email address.

The purpose of the survey was to assess to what extent SGEi has been ‘Closing the gap’ between the needs and expectations of internationals and Dutch healthcare. For this purpose responses have been compared with the outcome, where available, of previous surveys of internationals not registered at SGEi.

2. The survey: Summary of results

2.1. Response

About 35% of patients responded to the survey, with males and females being equally represented. The age-group of 25-34 is best represented (69%). 12% is 18-24, 15% 35-44, with the remaining 4% being 45 or older. This age profile is representative of the internationals registered at SGEi.

55% of respondents visited the center 1-2 times, 31% 3 times or more. 14% had not (yet) visited SGEi and have not been surveyed further on their experiences.

Of those who did visit the center 15% had their visit over a year ago, 34% 6-12 months ago, 21% 3-6 months ago and 31% less than 3 months ago. This reflects the growth of patients registered since the start in 2015.

2.2. Experiences with seeing a doctor at SGE international

Previous research showed that trust in Dutch doctors (GP’s) was generally low. They were found to be not very open-minded in their approach, often not having enough time. Patients also found that they often had a disagreement about a referral to a medical specialist.

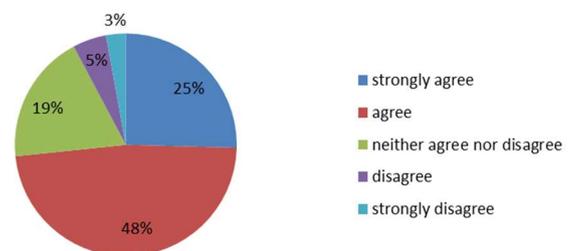
The responses show that patients at SGEi have a markedly better experience.

73% of patients (strongly) agree with the statement that they **trust** their GP knows the best treatment and that they feel confident in his or her care.

In previous research this number was only 32% and 39% was stating that they did not trust their doctor.

87% of patients at SGEi find that the doctor has enough **time** for them. In previous research only 46% had that experience and 38% said that their doctor did not have sufficient time. At SGEi 7% of patients said that they found the doctor to have too little time.

I trust that my doctor (GP) knows the best treatments or tests for me, and I feel confident in his/her care

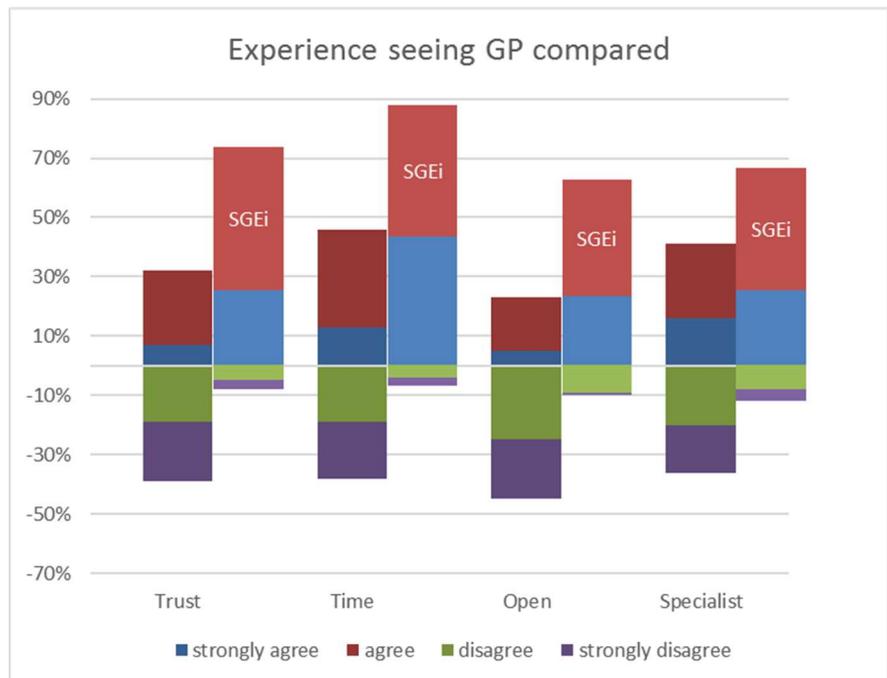


Graph 1 Trust in GP at SGEi

62% of patients at SGEi (strongly) agree with the statement ‘My doctor (GP) is open to different ways of doing things, including ideas I bring from my home country’ and 10% (strongly) disagree. In previous surveys only 23% found their doctor to be open-minded and 45% did not think so.

In previous surveys 36% of patients (strongly) disagreed with the statement that they had no difficulty to agree with their GP when to see a **medical specialist**. In other words: they found it difficult to agree on this. At SGEi only 12% of patients found this difficult while 66% agreed with the statement that they had no difficulty agreeing with their GP.

The performance of SGEi as reported by the respondents in answer to the questions of trust, time, open-mindedness and access to medical specialists is summarized in graph 2. Compared to surveys of internationals not registered at SGEi, the experience of seeing a GP at SGEi is markedly better.



Graph 2 Comparing the experience of patients at SGEi with others

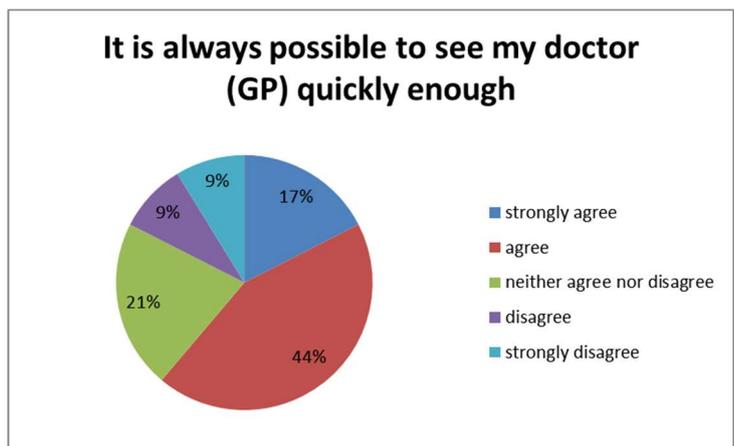
2.3. Scheduling an appointment

61% of respondents (strongly) agree it is always possible to see the GP at SGEi quickly enough. 68% find that office hours work well for them.

Still 18% don't find that is always possible to see the doctor quickly enough and 15% find that office hours are not convenient. This is also reflected in the comments and suggestions where many say they prefer extending practice hours to 5 days a week.

88% find it easy to schedule an appointment at SGEi. 81% (strongly) agree that their appointment with a professional at SGEi always starts on time. Of the remaining 19% that does not agree appointments always start on time, 58% found that the waiting time was reasonable.

83% of respondents (strongly) agree that they are called back on the agreed time when they have scheduled a call from the GP or doctor's assistant.



Graph 3 Quick access to GP at SGEi

2.4. Online functions

69% of respondents always or sometimes use online functions of SGEi when they are seeking information. The remainder never used these functions when they had the need for information or simply never had the need.

68% always or sometimes use online functions when scheduling an appointment, with 19% never using online functions for making a reservation. The remainder did not have the need yet to schedule an appointment. Of those that used online appointment scheduling, 82% found this easy to do.

29% use online functions to ask for (repeat) prescriptions, of which (only) 51% find it easy to use.

2.5. The center and its professionals

The professionals of SGEi are regarded to be very helpful and friendly. 94% (strongly) agree with this assertion. In previous surveys only 47% found professionals to be helpful and friendly and 23% finding the opposite.

99% find that the professionals at SGEi speak English well and do not mind speaking another language than Dutch. Earlier surveys amongst internationals not registered at SGEi showed this percentage to be 56%, with 22% not satisfied with the staff's language skills.

96% find the SGEi office to be comfortable clean and attractive (earlier surveys 75%).

Despite the fact that SGEi serves patients from a large geographic region (all of Eindhoven as well as some neighbouring communities), 88% find that the centre is easy to get to. Amongst patients surveyed previously (who in the majority of cases were registered with a healthcare centre in their postal area), this number is 80%.

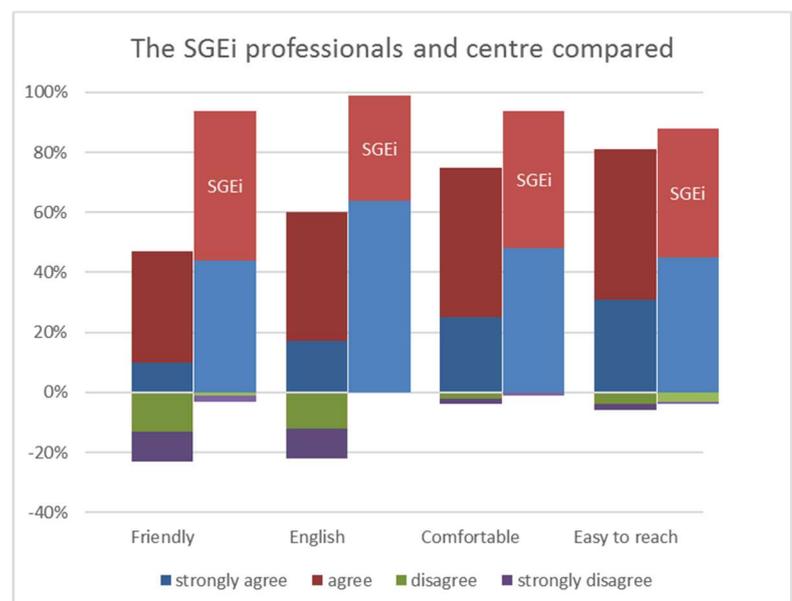
84% find that their privacy is well protected at SGEi, but still 16% disagree or are not sure. (Also see paragraph) This topic was not previously researched.

The answers to the questions about friendliness of professionals and their willingness to speak English as well as

the answers about the centre itself in terms of comfort (cleanliness, attractiveness) and reachability are summarized in graph 5. Compared to surveys of internationals not registered at SGEi, the experience with professionals and the centre of SGEi is better.



Graph 4 Professionals at SGEi are friendly and helpful



Graph 5 Centre and professionals of SGEi compared to others



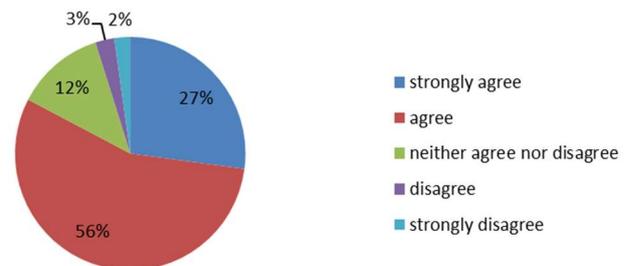
2.6. Overall evaluation

83% of respondents feel that the needs and expectations of internationals have been taken into account in the set-up of SGEi and its services.

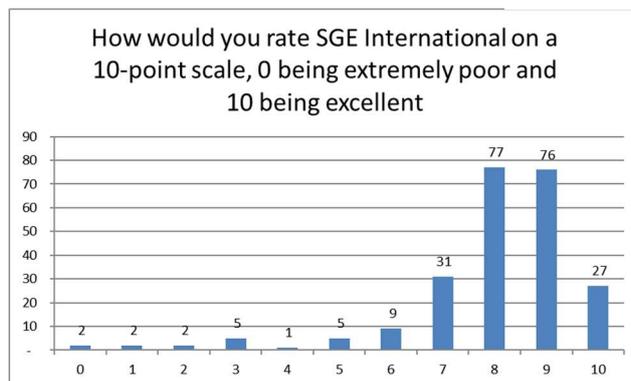
Summarizing their experience internationals award SGEi on average an 8.

The majority of internationals will likely recommend SGEi to other internationals, representing a net promoter score (NPS) of 46.

I feel that the needs and expectations of internationals, like myself, have been taken into account in the set-up of the centre and its services



Graph 6 Needs and expectations of internationals taken into account



Graph 8 Rating awarded by patients of SGEi



Graph 7 Likelihood of patients recommending SGEi

3. Suggestions

A large number of respondents (45%) gave comments and suggestions on the free-format questions of the survey. There were many compliments regarding the centre and its professionals, but also critical remarks that were almost every time positively worded.

- Quite a few said that they would like to see the centre to be open 5 days a week. Some were asking for office hours in the evening or on Saturday.
- Others said that they would like to see more services at the centre, like a pharmacy or a dentist.
- There were some comments regarding misunderstanding about dates, times and sometimes location of an appointment, with the suggestion to confirm appointments with the details.
- There were also some comments regarding the fact that it sometimes was hard to have a private discussion with the doctors' assistant at the reception desk, with the open waiting area so close by.
- There were a few reports about the user-friendliness of the online prescription refill facility, as well as unclarity about the delivery options of medication.
- Some had questions or remarks about the unclarity of applicable tariffs, the need for payments in cash and invoices or reminders in Dutch.
- With regard to medical care there were requests for preventative tests, more assistance when being referred and access to a log of appointments.