

# Not all rounds improve patient satisfaction.

## Here's what 6,000 HCAHPS surveys have to say.

Hospital rounds are standard practice for good reasons. They're built into workflows, measured in dashboards, and assumed to drive better patient experiences. But do they?

The [CipherHealth](#) analytics team got to work and analyzed 6,000 HCAHPS surveys across six organizations. Here's what we found really impacts how patients feel—and what most rounding strategies miss.



### What the data tells us about rounding

Let's start with what we thought we knew: rounding of any kind helps patients have a better experience of their hospital stay. Turns out, the data tells a more specific story.

When rounds were *interactive*—two-way communication between patients and a member of their care team—patient satisfaction scores jumped across the board. That's compared to non-interactive rounds, where someone might pop in, say a few words, and move on. Here's the difference:

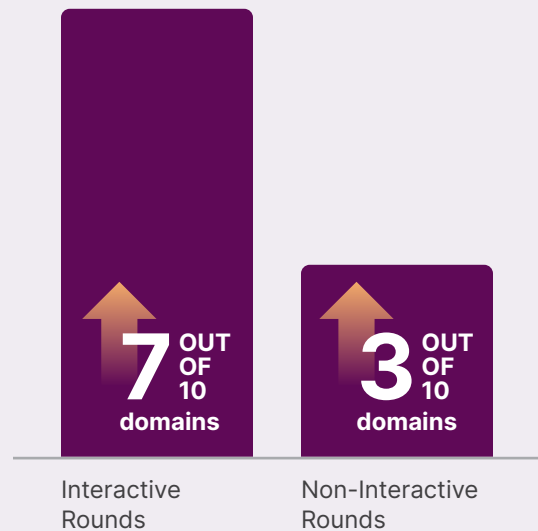
- Patients who had interactive rounds were more likely to report Top Box scores, with increases seen in **7 out of 10 domains**
- Patients who were rounded on *without* meaningful interaction? Just **3 out of 10 domains** improved

And the biggest jump? It came in how patients rated the hospital overall.

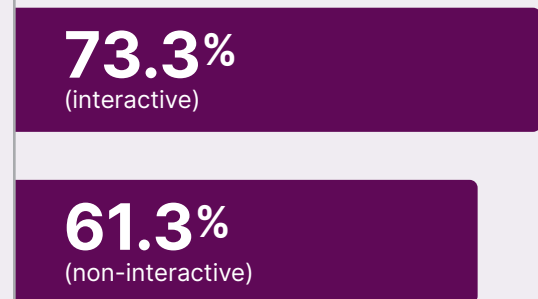


**Insight:** When care teams engage more during rounds, patients tend to feel better about their entire experience—not just the moment, but how they rate their hospital stay overall.

### The Difference in Top Box Scores by Round Type

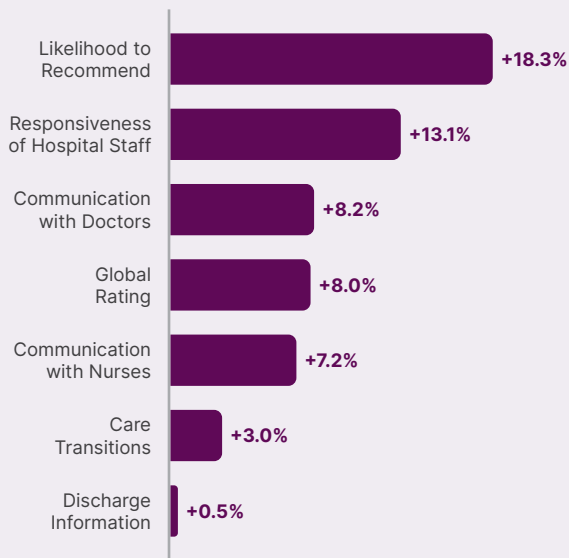


### How Global Rating is Impacted by Round Type



## Addressing Opportunity Areas = Increases in HCAHPS Domains

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## Patient issues are actually an opportunity

When patients voice concerns during rounding, it's not a setback. It's a signal. And more importantly, it's a chance to act. Patients who reported an opportunity area (OA)—things like delays, discomfort, or unmet needs—started off with lower satisfaction scores. That's no surprise. These were patients whose care hadn't met expectations.

But here's the upside. When those issues were actually addressed, scores improved. Even patients who began with a negative experience left with a more positive one. That's the benefit of real-time feedback: **you still have time to course-correct while the patient is still in care.**



**Insight:** Every patient issue is an opening. Follow through, and it's more likely you'll be able to turn what was initially dissatisfaction into loyalty.

## One hour makes all the difference

But addressing issues isn't enough either—not if it happens too late. The real driver of patient satisfaction is timely action. When a patient speaks up—whether it's about cleanliness, noise, or food—the clock starts ticking. And based on our data, there's a target number: **One hour.**

When care teams followed up on patient issues within 1 hour, satisfaction scores improved in 8 out of 10 HCAHPS domains. That's a significant lift and it echoes the same gains in domains we saw in earlier:

- Likelihood to Recommend: +18.3%
- Responsiveness of Hospital Staff: +13.1%
- Communication with Doctors: +8.2%

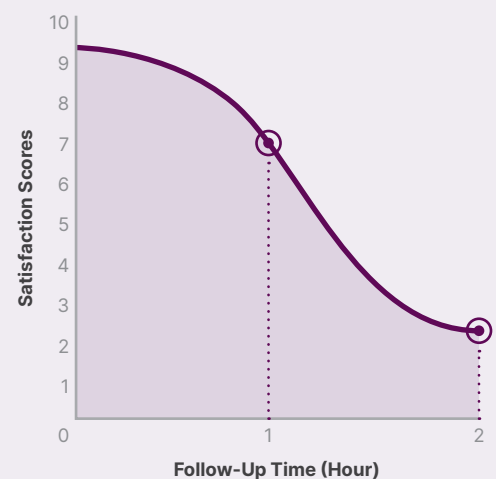
Wait two hours? The impact shrinks. Fast follow-up doesn't just fix the issue—it boosts confidence in the entire care team.



**Insight:** When you act fast, patients notice. And their scores reflect it.

## Score Impact by Follow-Up Time

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**<1 Hour:**  
Higher scores in 8 of 10 domains

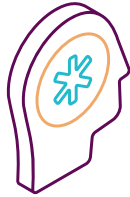
**<2 Hours:**  
Smaller improvements across the board

## So, what actually moves the needle?

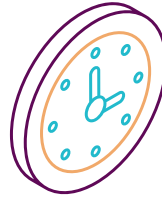
We assumed rounding leads to better patient experience—and it can. But the data showed us that's only half of it. The real value of rounding comes from what happens after the conversation. When care teams follow through quickly and meaningfully, patients feel it—and satisfaction rises. Here's the rundown on what we learned from thousands of surveys:



Interactive rounds lead to a higher percentage of patients reporting Top Box scores



Addressing issues improves patient experience—even when things didn't start out great



Following up within one hour makes the biggest impact on scores across the board

While it might not sound complicated, it does require intention. Your organization has an opportunity: to turn rounding into one of your most powerful tools for improving patients' experience. Small shifts in how (and how fast) you engage can make a measurable impact on how patients rate their care.



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To learn how we can help you align these findings with your rounding goals, check out how **CipherRounds** works, or **reach out to us directly**.