

which 3440 were transferred to the EP (67.4%), 2958 of EP assessed callers (86.0%) had a family doctor, but only one-quarter of such patients could contact their family doctor. Overall, 2301/3440 “red” callers did not attend an ED (67.0%) compared to 2508/4770 in the control period (52.6%), for an absolute reduction of 14.4% (95% CI 12.2 to 16.4%,  $p < 0.0001$ ). In callers for those <17 years old there was a 20.3% (95% CI 16.5 to 24.1%) reduction in ED visits compared to the control group: 771/1520 (50.7%) vs 364/1067 (30.4%). 40% of callers attending an ED (458/1139) were advised to try non-ED follow up by the MD and 108 (9.5%) were admitted, with no difference in 30-day mortality between groups. Age and CTAS distribution were similar between the two groups and the non MD-transferred cohort. Mean caller satisfaction was excellent (4.7/5.0). **Conclusion:** EP supplementation of a RN advice service has the potential to reduce ED visits by almost 15% while providing excellent safety and satisfaction.

**Keywords:** input mitigation, telemedicine, emergency department crowding

#### LO17

##### A comparative evaluation of ED crowding metrics and associations with patient mortality

A. McRae, MD, I. Usman, PhD, D. Wang, MSc, G. Innes, MD, E. Lang, MD, B.H. Rowe, MD, MSc, M. Schull, MD, MSc, R.J. Rosychuk, PhD, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB

**Introduction:** Over 700 different input, throughput and output metrics have been used to quantify ED crowding. Of these, only ED length-of-stay (ED LOS) has been shown to be associated with mortality. No comparative evaluation of ED crowding metrics has been performed to determine which ones have the strongest association with patient mortality. The objective of this study was to compare the strength of association of common ED input, throughput and output metrics to patient mortality.

**Methods:** Administrative data from five years of ED visits (2011-2014) at three urban EDs were linked to develop a database of over 900,000 ED visits with patient demographics, electronic time stamps for care processes, dispositions and outcomes. The data were randomly divided into three partitions of equal size. Here we report the findings from one partition of 253,938 ED visits. The remaining two data partitions will be used to validate these findings. Commonly-used crowding metrics were quantified and aggregated by day or by shift (0800-1600, 1600-2400, 2400-0800), and the shift-specific metrics assigned to each patient. The primary outcome was 7-day all-cause mortality. Multilevel logistic regression models were developed for 7-day mortality, with selected ED crowding metrics and a common set of confounders as predictors. The strength of association between the crowding metrics and mortality was compared using Akaike’s Information Criterion (AIC) and the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC): ED crowding metrics with lower AIC and BIC have stronger associations with 7-day mortality. **Results:** Of 909,000 ED encounters, 124,679 (16.5%) arrived by EMS, 149,233 (19.7%) were admitted, and 3,808 patients (0.5%) died within 7 days of ED arrival. Of input metrics, the model with ED wait-time was better (i.e. had a smaller AIC and BIC) than models for daily census, ED occupancy or LWBS proportion for predicting 7-day mortality. Of throughput metrics, the model with mean ED LOS was better than the model for mean MD care time. Of output metrics, the model with daily inpatient hospital occupancy was better than the model with mean boarding time. **Conclusion:** Based on one data partition, regression models based on the average wait-time, ED LOS and inpatient occupancy best predicted 7-day mortality. These results will be validated in the two other data partitions to confirm the best-performing ED input, throughput and output metrics.

**Keywords:** emergency department crowding, crowding metrics

#### LO18

##### How big is emergency access block in Canadian hospitals?

G. Innes, MD, M. Sivilotti, MSc, MD, H.J. Ovens, MD, A. Chochinov, MD, K. McLelland, MD, C. Kim Sing, MD, D.J. MacKinnon, MD, A. Chopra, MD, A. Dukelow, CHE, MD, S. Horak, MD, N. Barclay, MD, D. Kalla, MD, E.S. Kwok, MD, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB

**Introduction:** Emergency department (ED) access block is the #1 safety concern in Canadian EDs. Its main cause is *hospital access block*, manifested by prolonged *boarding* of inpatients in EDs. Hospital administrators often believe this problem is too big to be solved and would require large increases in hospital capacity. Our objective was to quantify ED access gap by estimating the cumulative hours that CTAS 1-3 patients are blocked in waiting areas. This value, expressed as a proportion of inpatient care capacity, is an estimate of the bed hours a hospital would have to find in order to resolve ED access. **Methods:** A convenience sample of urban Canadian ED directors were asked to provide data summarizing their CTAS 1-3 inflow, the proportion triaged to nursed stretchers vs. RAZ or Intake areas, and time to care space. Total ED access gap was calculated by multiplying the number of CTAS 1-3 patients by their average delay to care space. Time to stretcher was captured electronically at participating sites, but time to RAZ or intake spaces was often not. In such cases, respondents provided time from triage to first RN or MD assessment in these areas. The primary outcome was total annual ED access block hours for emergent-urgent patients, expressed as a proportion of funded inpatient bed hours.

**Results:** Directors of 40 EDs were queried. Six sites did not gather the data elements required. Of 34 remaining, 29 (85.3%) provided data, including 15 tertiary (T), 10 community (C) and 2 pediatric (P) sites in 12 cities. Mean census for the 3 ED types was 72,308 (T), 58,849 (C) and 61,050 (P) visits per year. CTAS 1-3 patients accounted for 73.4% (T), 67.7% (C) and 66.2% (P) of visits in the 3 groups, and 34% (T), 46% (C) and 44% (P) of these patients were treated in RAZ or intake areas rather than staffed ED stretchers. Mean time to stretcher/RAZ care was 50/71 min (T), 46/62 min (C), and 37/59 min (P). Average ED access gap was 47,564 hrs (T), 37,222 hrs (C) and 35,407 hrs (P), while average inpatient bed capacity was 599 beds (5,243,486 hrs), 291 beds (2,545,875 hrs) and 150 beds (1,314,000 hrs) respectively. ED access gap as a proportion of inpatient care capacity was 0.93% for tertiary, 1.46% for community and 2.69% for pediatric centres. **Conclusion:** ED access gap is very large in Canadian EDs, but small compared to hospital operating capacity. Hospital capacity or efficiency improvements in the range of 1-3% could profoundly mitigate ED access block.

**Keywords:** access block, crowding, efficiency

#### LO19

##### Introduction of a regional interactive group supervision tool to maximize multi-program research project support

P.R. Atkinson, MD, K. Magee, MD, MSc, A. Carter, MD, MPH, K.F. Hurley, MD, A. Sibley, MD, M. Watson, MD, D. Urquhart, C. DeMone, E. Fitzpatrick, MN, J. Fraser, BN, J. French, BSc, M. Howlett, MD, J. MacIntyre, MD, D. Petrie, MD, Department of Emergency Medicine, Dalhousie University, Saint John Regional Hospital, Saint John, NB

**Introduction/Innovation Concept:** University Departments of Emergency Medicine are responsible for the supervision of research and other scholarly projects for fellows, residents and students, though often lack resources to provide adequate input and oversight. Many departments cover large geographical areas and several programs. We piloted new research committee structures and processes to improve oversight and