

This disparity in the survival rates of elderly trauma victims has several possible explanations. It is likely that age itself affects the body's ability to respond to injury,<sup>9</sup> and although most older patients can maintain internal homeostasis under normal conditions, they are less likely to have the physiological reserve to respond to disruptions of the body's balance.<sup>7,9</sup> Pre-existing disease (present in up to 70% of older patients) may also play a role; however, comorbidity has not been found conclusively to influence survival after trauma.<sup>9,10</sup>

The patients presented above may not represent typical geriatric patients with minor chest trauma, and many clinicians would suggest that one or both warranted admission on their first visit; however, it could also be argued that hospitalization might not have changed the outcome for either. These cases serve to remind us that there is less room for error when treating older patients with injuries. It is also important to remember that, despite our sadly limited inpatient bed availability, the Canadian Medical Protective Association (and Canadian legal precedents) state clearly that the lack of resource availability is not a justification for inappropriate care.

## Conclusion

Most patients with simple rib fractures can be treated as outpatients, but older patients with two or more rib fractures have a higher risk of unfavourable outcomes and should be considered for hospitalization.

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**Correspondence to:** Dr. S.G. Campbell, Department of Emergency Medicine, New Halifax Infirmary, 1796 Summer St., Halifax NS B3H 3A7; EMSGC@qe2-hsc.ns.ca

## Apologies and errors

In the 1999 CAEP/AMUQ Scientific Assembly Oral Abstract Presentation Schedule, published in the October issue (vol. 1, no. 3) of *CJEM*, Dr. Grant Innes and Dr. Peter Rosen were identified as the moderators of the Resident Research Competition (pg. 169). Dr. Bob McGraw, a moderator and the primary organizer of the competition, was inadvertently omitted because of a misunderstanding on the editor's part. Apologies go out to Dr. McGraw for this oversight. [G.I.]

In that same issue of *CJEM*, on page 197, we listed the reviewers who helped us from November 1998 to August 1999. We inadvertently forgot to thank the following reviewers. Our apologies to: Scott Anderson, Jeffrey Arnold, Joe Finkler, Anna Jarvis, Gerald Lazarenko, Marilyn Li, D. Bruce MacLeod, R. Bruce McLeod, Linda Papa, David Warren and Brian Young. [G.I.]