

Repeat Emergency Room Visits for Hand and Upper Extremity Injuries

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Objectives

- Many patients have difficulty obtaining outpatient follow-up for non-urgent hand conditions
- Average ED visit costs **\$700 more** than an office-based visit
- Hypothesis: many patients who visit a second ED for the same condition did not require emergent care, and are largely uninsured

Methods

- Retrospective review of Ortho Hand consults from 2002-2009
- Inclusion criteria: patients previously evaluated by another ED w/i 30 days for same complaint
 - Transfers vs. Walk-in patients
- Demographics, diagnosis, instructions from initial ED, date and time of ED visits, treatment received, and insurance status were recorded
- Clinical urgency quantified on ordinal scale 1:non-urgent,2:semi-elective,3:urgent,4:emergent

Results

- 401 patients, 89% walk-ins
- 96% of walk-in patients treated and released

Comparison of Transfer vs Walk-in Patients				
		Number of patients		
Demographic Information		Walk-in (n=355)	Direct transfer (n=46)	p-value
Gender				p=.43
	Male	248	37	
	Female	107	9	
Insurance				
	Uninsured/Self-pay	216	25	P=.40
	Medicaid	117	8	p<.05
	Medicare/VA	4	5	p<.05
	Commercial	18	8	p<.05
Day of Presentation				p<.001
	Weekday	318	30	
	Weekend	37	16	
Time of presentation				p<.001
	Daytime	301	17	
	Night	54	29	
Treatment				p<.001
	Treated/Released	342	29	
	Admit/OR	13	17	
Severity				p<.01
	1,2	291	25	
	3,4	64	21	

Results

- Study: **60% Uninsured**, 31% Medicaid
- State: **16% Uninsured**, 8% Medicaid
- Majority ED walk-in pts presented on weekdays(90%) or daytime hours(85%)
- Majority (82%) of walk-in patients had non-urgent or semi-elective diagnoses
- No significant travel distance between transfer and walk-in patients

Conclusions

- Vast majority patients presented on weekdays during working business hrs, when most offices and clinics are open
- Vast majority patients did NOT have conditions requiring emergency care
- Important to find a workable solution to provide timely outpatient follow-up

References

- Machlin SC. STATISTICAL BRIEF #318. 2011.
- Calfee RP, et al. *JBJS Am.* 2012; 94(23): 2177-84.