

Preparing Emergency Patients and Providers: Results from a Patient Expectation Collection Tool

B Rose-Davis, C Cassidy, S MacPhee, D Chiasson, J Nunn, J Curran

Introduction

Effective communication to develop a shared understanding of patient expectations is critical to a positive encounter in the emergency department (ED). However, there is limited research examining patient/caregiver (PC) expectations in the ED. This study aims to examine PC expectations of care in the ED using a patient expectation questionnaire.

Methods

The Preparing Emergency Patients and Providers (PrEPP) tool was designed in 2014 to collect PC expectations for their visit to the emergency department (ED). The PrEPP tool was provided to all PCs at CTAS 2 or higher when they registered at one of 4 EDs in the Halifax area from January to June 2016. Completed tools were collected and entered into a REDCap database where qualitative data was coded into predetermined categories (i.e. sickness, injury). Descriptive quantitative analysis was then performed.

Results

In total, 11,571 PrEPP tools were collected representing about 12% of ED visits to the 4 sites during the study period. The main factors cited that resulted in PCs decision to come to the ED were: themselves (66%), family/friends (20%), 811 (8%), family doctor (6%), and walk-in-clinic (5%). PCs main causes of worry were: injury (17%), sickness (16%), and pain (14%). The main perceived causes of symptoms were similar: injury (24%), sickness (12%), and infection (12%). The main expectations for the ED visit were to: talk to a doctor (62%), have an x-ray (34%), and have a blood test (18%). Nine percent wanted a doctor's note. Most PCs, 55%, did not expect medication in or after their ED visit.

Conclusion

This study identifies the factors that influence patient and caregiver's decision to present to the ED and their expectations of the ED visits. Obtaining expectations early in the patient encounter may provide opportunities for improved communication between clinicians and patients.