

bias them to premature diagnostic closure of patients as 'placement problems', risking misdiagnosis of active medical conditions. An observational study to retrospectively quantify the time spent in the ED by patients referred to AP services for urgent placement from the ED. **Methods:** A three-year audit of ED social work records of patients referred for AP. **Results:** For the period of October 1 2015-September 30, 2018, the ED social work service kept records of patients referred for AP from the ED. During this period, a total of 142 patients were referred to AP (40, 50, and 52 in each year respectively). There was an increase of 10 patients between 2015/16 and 2016/17 and two patients from 2016/17 to 2017/18. The overall length of stay for this subset of ED patients during this three-year period was alarmingly high, with an average length of stay of four days per patient (range 2.7 hours-18.5 days) compared to an average of all patients of 4.9 hours and admitted patients of 13.6 hours. **Conclusion:** Patients in the ED who are referred to AP services consume considerable ED resources, often requiring complete medical work-up, capacity assessments and close monitoring by multiple emergency personnel. This has been reported to cause considerable stress and friction between staff and consulting services. Furthermore, these patients are poorly served in a hectic, brightly lit, and noisy environment. The impact is often not fully appreciated due to ineffective capture by patient tracking systems.

**Keywords:** adult protection, emergency department flow, quality improvement and patient safety

#### P072

##### Comparing met vs. unmet palliative care needs in patients with end-stage conditions presenting to two Canadian emergency departments

M. Garrido Clua, MSc, M. Kruhlak, S. Kirkland, MSc, BSc, C. Villa-Roel, MD, PhD, A. Elwi, PhD, B. O'Neill, BN, MBA, A. Brisebois, MD, MSc, S. Duggan, MD, B. Rowe, MD, MSc, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB

**Introduction:** Patients with end-stage conditions require integrated physical, spiritual, psychological and social care. Despite efforts to provide comprehensive community care, those with severe symptoms often present to emergency departments (EDs) with palliative care (PC) needs. The objective of this study was to identify patients with end-stage diagnoses presenting to EDs, and to document and compare their PC needs. **Methods:** A four-month prospective cohort study was conducted in two Canadian EDs. Using a modified PC screening tool, volunteer emergency physicians identified adult patients with end-stage illnesses and documented their PC needs. This tool has the ability to classify patients as having met vs. unmet PC needs based on the documentation of risk factors. Research assistants documented demographic information, severity at presentation (Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale [CTAS]), disposition and revisits from an electronic repository. Bivariate comparisons between patients with met vs. unmet PC needs were completed. **Results:** Overall, 663 patients were enrolled, of which 78% (n = 518/663) were identified as having unmet PC needs according to the screening tool. Cancer was the most prevalent condition in each group (43% unmet needs, 37% met needs). There was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of age, sex or CTAS score. The unmet PC needs group was more likely to be admitted (68% vs. 50%; p = 0.0001) when compared to patients with PC needs assessed as being met.

No significant difference was noted in terms of time to physician assessment or ED length of stay. The two groups did not significantly differ in the proportion of return visits within 30 days (34% vs. 32%) or the average number of return visits (3 vs. 2 visits). A higher proportion of patients with unmet PC needs made at least one visit to the ED in the 6 months prior to their index visit compared to patients with met PC needs (74% vs. 51%, p < 0.001); yet, the average number of ED visits was similar between the groups (3 visits). **Conclusion:** This study revealed that patients with end-stage diagnoses, especially cancer, commonly have unmet PC needs. They are also more likely to present to the ED and to require hospitalization than patients in whom PC needs have been met. Further investigations into their clinical profile and health care utilization may clarify the impact of their unmet PC needs on the healthcare system.

**Keywords:** palliative care, unmet needs

#### P073

##### Consultations in the emergency department: a systematic review

S. Kirkland, MSc, L. Gaudet, MSc, D. Keto-Lambert, MLIS, B. Rowe, MD, MSc, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB

**Introduction:** While consultation is a common and important aspect of emergency department (ED) care, a previous systematic review identified significant utilization and process variation across ED's. The aim of this review update was to examine the proportion of the patients undergoing consultation in the ED among recent studies. **Methods:** Eight primary literature databases and the grey literature were searched. Studies published from 2007 to 2018 focusing on all-comers to the ED and reporting a consultation-related outcome were included. Disease- and specialty-specific studies were not eligible. Two independent reviewers screened studies for relevance, inclusion, quality assessment, and data extraction. Disagreements were resolved through consensus. Means, medians and interquartile ranges are reported. Wilcoxon-rank sum test and one-way ANOVA were used to identify differences between groups, as appropriate. **Results:** A total of 2632 unique citations and 49 studies from the grey literature were screened, of which 29 primary studies were included. Fifteen studies reported on the proportion of ED patients undergoing consultation, involving EDs in the Middle East (n = 4), North America (n = 4), Asia (n = 4), and Europe (n = 3). Overall, the proportion of patients receiving consultation ranged from 7% to 78% (median: 26%; IQR: 20%, 38%). There were no differences in the proportions of consulted patients based on country of origin. Ten studies were conducted prior to 2013, while five studies recruited patients during and after 2013. The mean proportion of consulted patients was lower for post-2012 studies compared to pre-2012 studies (mean: 18% vs. 36%; p = 0.0048). The proportion of consulted patients admitted to hospital ranged considerably between the 14 reporting studies (median: 56%; IQR: 49%, 76%). No differences in the proportion of admitted patients undergoing a consult were identified based on country of origin or year of recruitment for the study. **Conclusion:** Although consultation utilization appears to be decreasing overall, there is considerable practice variation in EDs around the world. These differences may result from variation in patient acuity, case-load, staffing levels, institutional and health-system organization, and medical training and future research should explore reasons for these differences.

**Keywords:** admission, consultation, systematic review