

## Primary Care Physicians in Urgent Care Centres of the United Kingdom

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**Abstract :** Overcrowding in Emergency departments (ED) of United Kingdom has become a common problem. Urgent Care centres were developed nearly a decade ago to reduce pressure on EDs. Unfortunately, the development of Urgent Care centres has failed to produce the projected effects. It was thought that nearly 40% patients attending ED would go to Urgent Care centres and these would be staffed by Primary care Physicians. Data reveals that no more than 20% patients were seen by Primary Care Physicians even when the Urgent Care Centre was based in the ED. This study was carried out at the ED of George Eliot Hospital, Nuneaton, UK where the Urgent Care centre was based in the ED and employed Primary Care Physicians with special interest in trauma for nearly one year. This was then followed by a Primary Care Physician and Advanced Nurse Practitioner. We compared the number of patients seen during these periods and the cost-effectiveness of the service. We randomly selected a week of patients seen by Primary Care Physicians with special interest in Trauma and by Primary Care Physicians and the Advanced Nurse Practitioner. We compared the number and type of patients seen during these two periods. Nearly 38% patients were seen by Primary care Physician with special interest in Trauma, whilst only 14.3% patients were seen by the Primary care Physician and Advanced Nurse Practitioner. The Primary Care Physicians with special interest in trauma were paid less. Our study confirmed that unless Primary Care Physicians are able to treat minor trauma and interpret x-rays, the urgent care service is not going to be cost effective. Numerous previous studies have shown that 15 to 20% patients attending ED can be treated by Primary Care Physicians who do not require any investigations for their management. It is advantageous to have Urgent Care Centres within the ED because if the patient deteriorates they can be transferred to ED. We recommend that the Urgent care Centres should be a part of ED. Our study shows that Urgent care Centres in the ED can be helpful and cost effective if staffed by either senior Emergency Physicians or Primary Care Physicians with special interest and experience in the management of minor trauma.

**Keywords :** urgent care centres, primary care physician, advanced nurse practitioner, trauma

**Conference Title :** ICEM 2017 : International Conference on Emergency Medicine

**Conference Location :** Dubai, United Arab Emirates

**Conference Dates :** November 24-25, 2017