

ABSTRACT

This is a descriptive research on causes, implications and management of overcrowding in emergency department(ED) as perceived by emergency nurses in the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling was used in selecting fifty (50) respondents for the study. A self-developed structured questionnaire was tested for its validity and reliability before its administration to the respondents was used and a reliability coefficient of .68 was obtained. Findings showed that 20(40%) of the respondents agreed that too much time was spent by emergency staff in assessing patients' causes ED overcrowding, 20(40%) were of the opinion that increase in medical errors was a consequence of ED overcrowding. Also 20(40%) agreed that providing care only to patients with emergencies as a way of ameliorating ED overcrowding. Two research hypotheses were also tested using Chi square inferential statistics, the result revealed there is significant relationship between large sized Emergency Department and ED overcrowding. The research hypothesis also showed there is significant relationship between inadequacy and inefficiency of emergency staff and ED overcrowding ($X^2_{cal} = 39.04$ = calculated value, at alpha level 0.05 with df of 2, $X^2_{tab} = 5.9$, $X^2_{cal} = 11.26$ = calculated value, at alpha level 0.05 with df of 2, $X^2_{tab} = 5.9$). With the findings, there is a relationship between overcrowding and poor patient outcomes. Emergency staff especially nurses have a role to play in maintaining the standard of patient care in the face of overcrowding, but most of the solutions to overcrowding and resultant poor outcomes lie outside the ED. It is therefore recommended that Emergency nurses should adopt a good prioritization culture and the management should as well increase administrative commitment to address the issues that affect EDs.

Keywords: Causes, Congestion, Emergency Department, Implications, Management.