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Differentiated access to out-of-hours primary care through emergency access

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Background: Patients calling the Danish out-of-hours primary care service (OOH-PC; i.e. lægevagt) and Medical Helpline 1813 (i.e. Akuttefonen) queue up in the telephone waiting line. . At the moment, a patient calling has to wait in line for their turn to talk to the triage GP or triage nurse, even if the health problem is experienced as highly urgent or life-threatening. The alternative to waiting in line is calling 112 ambulance care instead, as there is no possibility to bypass the telephone waiting line.

Objective: To implement and test an emergency access intervention that allows callers to the out-of-hours service to jump the telephone waiting line if they experience their health problem as highly urgent.

Design: Randomized controlled trial

Setting: OOH-PC in the Central Denmark Region and Medical Helpline 1813 in the Capital region of Denmark

Subjects: All patients calling the OOH-PC and 1813 from April to June 2016

Main Outcome Measures: Patient satisfaction and patient feeling of safety with the intervention and frequencies of patients who jumped the line along with the relevance of the jump evaluated by the triage professional.

Results: As the final study is planned for medio 2016, only preliminary results from a pilot study in the Central Denmark Region can be presented.