

OP16.2

Preschool children in the out-of-hours primary care services – a population-based study of factors related to calls considered irrelevant by GPs

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Background and Aim: The out-of-hours primary care (OOH-PC) services are reserved for problems that cannot wait till office hours. Many of the OOH-PC contacts concern children under 5 years of age. Studies have shown that 50-76.6% of OOH calls are considered inappropriate or non-urgent, and could have waited till the next days office hours or handled by self-care. The aim was to identify factors associated with health problems considered non-severe by the parents that the GPs estimated should have been targeted to the patient's own GP within office hours instead of the OOH-PC.

Method: The study is based on data from a comprehensive cross-sectional survey within the OOH-PC in The Central Denmark Region in 2010-2011. GPs filled out electronic questionnaires in a 12 month period from May 2010.

Subsequently a questionnaire was sent to the registered patients. Descriptive analyses were performed and contacts considered non-severe by parents were analysed using general lineary regression for association between baseline factors and being considered an irrelevant contact for the OOH-PC.

Results: in total, 1,748 contacts with children were included, 522 telephone consultations and 1,226 face-to-face contacts. in 317 of these, the GPs assessed that the parents should have taken the child to the GP in daytime. Having contact during the first four opening hours of the OOH-PC were statistically significantly associated with GPs considering them irrelevant compared with night time and all other periods (adj. prevalence rations (PR) 0.41-0.62 the first four opening hours being reference) irrespective of contact type. Additionally, a statistically significant association was also seen for face-to-face contacts involving symptom duration longer than 12 hours (PR>1.98).

Conclusions: The results may form a basis for targeted campaigns to the public about the optimal use of the OOH-PC and for further research into the citizens' motives for calling the OOH-PC.