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Why do Chinese immigrants go to emergency departments in an European country?

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Background & Aim: The population with Chinese origins is growing in some cities and they are localizing themselves in specific neighborhoods. Limited information exists about their use of emergency departments—likely due to cultural and linguistic barriers.

Objective: Determining the Chinese population's motives for visiting emergency departments in a level three hospital.

Method: Analysis of 740 computerized clinical histories of patients with Chinese origins who were seen during 2013 in an Emergency Department. Study variables: age, sex, day, time of visit, motives, discharge diagnosis (International Classification of Disease), visit outcome. Data analysis: SPSS.

Results: The analysis revealed that 97% were under the age of 60. Female to male ratio: 57.7% to 44.8%. 44.8% of visits occurred during the afternoon and 17% occurred during the morning. 25% occurred over the weekend.

in 21% of the clinical histories, a reason for the visit was not listed. Most frequent visit reasons: digestive symptoms (17%), traumas (11%), ophthalmologic visits (7.2%), otorhinolaryngologic visits (5.5%). Most frequent diagnosis: traumas (17.7%), digestive diagnosis (14.8%) (within this category abdominal pains occurred at 5% and gastroenteritis at 3.9%). Musculoskeletal issues (9.1%) (nonspecific pain being the most frequent at 6.1%-- followed by back pain at 2.2%). Ophthalmologic issues (8.4%). Respiratory issues 7.3% (with upper respiratory infections occurring at 3.9%). Women sought consultation more for abdominal pain and pathologic musculoskeletal conditions; men sought consultation for respiratory infections, gastroenteritis, and traumas. 88% were discharged and 3.3% required admission. No deaths were recorded.

Conclusions: The profile of the patient attended to in the emergency department is young and active with acute problems such as traumas, abdominal symptoms, respiratory issues, musculoskeletal issues, and these patients tended to have favorable outcomes. What is significant is that in 1 out of every 5 histories no reason for the visit was recorded.