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### **Interprofessional collaboration: the approach to effective triage**

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**Introduction:** Can you imagine 800 patients crowding in a 200-seater waiting area in the outpatient queuing as early as 3 in the morning? Scarce resources and manpower make triage a daunting task. Most health care providers today have not been trained to work as part of integrated teams resulting to suboptimal conditions in patient care settings. The individual and collective skills and experience of team members in an interprofessional collaboration has been a key factor in health care services.

**Objective:** This report aimed to present how an effective triage system in the outpatient of Quirino Memorial Medical Center, a tertiary government hospital in Manila, was developed through interprofessional collaboration. A new triage team was organized - two Family Medicine residents as leads, nurse and 2 postgraduate medical interns. Objectives revolved around the establishment of an efficient and systematic process of classifying and prioritizing cases with undifferentiated complaints.

**Method:** Focus group interview of team members on their perceptions and expectations on their duties and responsibilities in the triage were elicited.

**Results:** The team agreed that having a triage system in the overcrowded outpatient is essential to optimize patient care. Each member was clear with their respective tasks. Family medicine residents with their experience on first contact care act as overseer on the overall patients' condition in the area. They validate cases seen by post grad interns. Nurses acts as liaison between patient and health care personnel. While post graduate interns, their tasks include primary survey and risk assessment.

**Conclusion:** Family physicians serve as gatekeepers and first contact of care. It is imperative to develop competent skills both in patient assessment and interprofessional collaborative work to be able to lead an effective team. Role understanding and sharing of responsibilities suggest that open communication, and interdependency would enhance teamwork quality.