

Critically Appraised Topic

Title: Delay in prehospital analgesia means longer delay in ER analgesia

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Clinical Scenario: An ALS unit responds to an nursing facility for a 80 year old pt whom has had a fall from standing height. On assessment they find the pts right leg to be shortened and angulated with good distal pulse motor and sensation. The Paramedics load the patient onto the stretcher and transport to the emergency department, which is 3 minutes away. No analgesia is provided due to the proximity to the emergency department. In the busy department that day the patient waits for over an hour until physician assessment and analgesia is ordered.

PICO (Population- Intervention- Comparison- Outcome) Question:

Do prehospital patients (P) being deferred for analgesia (I) until emergency dept assessment face delays in analgesia.

P – prehospital pts with pain

I – EMS waits til ED for analgesia

C- EMS administers analgesia

O – overall time to analgesia for pt

Search Strategy

In PubMed: prehospital analgesia, pain assessment

Search Outcome:

This search found 70 hits.

Relevant papers

Author	Sample	Design	Outcomes	Results	Weakness
Abbuhl, F. Reed, D	104 patients	Retrospective chart review	Patients received analgesia sooner when it was administered by EMS. Significant time delays were found when analgesia was withheld for	Mean time to receive analgesia by EMS was 23 minutes. Mean time for analgesia in hospital	Focus on hip and lower extremity injury. No indication if patient refused or had contraindications. Noted some missing charts

			hospital assessment	after triage was 75 min.	

Comments:

Although this particular study had a limited patient catchment group, the authors referred to other papers with similar findings. Patients whom are assessed for pain prehospitally should be treated for this instead of having analgesia withheld depending on the overall clinical presentation.

Clinical Bottom Line:

Delays in prehospital assessment and treatment of pain may lead to delays in treatment of pain if it is withheld for physician assessment.

References

Abbuhl, F. Reed, David. Time to analgesia for patients with painful extremity injuries transported tot eh emergency department by ambulance. Prehospital emergency care, 7:4,445- 447.