

General practitioner follow-up in older patients after an emergency department admission

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Abstract

Background and objectives

Few studies investigate older patients with regards to general practice (GP) follow-up after an emergency department (ED) visit. We measured the proportion of older patients given explicit GP follow-up instructions who sought care by day 7 after an ED admission.

Methods

Patients discharged from the Fairfield Hospital ED (South Western Sydney), who were 65 years and older, were approached for a structured telephone interview. Data from the interview and the patient's ED discharge summary were analysed descriptively. Exploratory statistical analyses were conducted to identify potential explanatory factors.

Results

Fifty patients participated in the study. Most participants (76%) had attended GP follow-up by day 7. Those with more relatives who could be called on for help were more likely to follow-up ($p = 0.003$). Participants were who were not married (54% vs 84%), and non-drivers (53% vs 90%) were less likely to follow up.

Discussion

Close family support and car transport might influence GP follow-up in older people. Further exploration of contributing factors may be warranted.