
Emergency Nurses Face Issues Related to Training, Staffing, Stress, Overflowing EDs



Nurses working in emergency departments seek more training, stating that the high-pressure environment can negatively affect their decision-making.

Researchers from the University of East Anglia (UEA) conducted the first-ever U.K. survey of triage nurses to explore their backgrounds, training, and decision-making processes. The study is published in the journal *Emergency Nurse*.

More than 24 million patients visit emergency departments in the U.K. annually, creating a high-pressure situation with limited resources. These patients are triaged to assess the severity of their condition and to determine the urgency of treatment. These assessments need to be rapid and accurate to prevent delays and harm.

Based on the survey findings, triage nurses report that low staffing levels and busy environments negatively impact their stress and ability to triage effectively. The survey also reveals significant variations in the frequency and quality of training for this crucial role.

The study recruited 51 participants from hospitals across the U.K. through social media and online forums for nurses. These nurses, who assess and prioritise patients in A&E departments, come from diverse backgrounds ranging from newly qualified to experienced.

The nurses generally scored well when tested on their decision-making in urgent situations. However, the study found that training for triage nurses varied greatly, with 53% wanting more training and 43% feeling the quality and content of training could be improved.

The study also highlighted that a lack of space and staffing in emergency departments impacts efficiency.

These findings highlight the need for properly staffed triage areas with adequate space for patient assessments. There is a need for legislation for safe nurse staffing and a national standard for triage nurses, defining necessary knowledge and skills, and setting intervals for refresher courses.

Nursing managers also need to ensure the psychological welfare of nurses in emergency departments, providing access to proper support systems.

The researchers previously conducted a systematic review, finding that nurses worldwide prefer using clinical reasoning and intuition over triage algorithms. However, this latest survey indicated that U.K. nurses rely more on their training and comprehensive assessments rather than gut feelings when making decisions.

The researchers noted that the number of triage nurses in the U.K. is unknown, making it difficult to assess the study's reach. The data was self-reported, and future research could include more in-depth methods like interviews and a closer look at training.

Source: [University of East Anglia](#)

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