

 ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A feasible method to study the Danish out-of-hours primary care service

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INTRODUCTION

The primary care out-of-hours (OOH) service is of considerable importance; it is the main provider of freely accessible medical advice outside daytime hours, and it covers 75% of the active time in the healthcare system. Although the OOH handles three million contacts annually, only little is known about the reasons for encounter, the performed clinical work and the patient perspectives.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

During a one-year period (2010-2011), data on patient contacts were collected using pop-up questionnaires integrated into the existing IT system. The questions explored the contents and characteristics of patient contacts. A paper-based questionnaire was sent to the included patients.

RESULTS

Of all 700 general practitioners (GP) on duty, 383 (54.7%) participated at least once, and the participating GPs were representative of all GPs. In total, 21,457 contacts were registered; and the distribution of patient, contact and GP characteristics in OOH contacts was similar to the background contacts. Telephone consultations were most often offered to children and home visits primarily to elderly patients. The patient response rate was 51.2%. Females comprised the majority of the included contacts and of the respondents in the patient survey.

CONCLUSION

The method was highly feasible for generating a representative sample of contacts to OOH services. The project has formed a substantial and valid basis for further studies and future research in the OOH service.

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 ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Danish Fracture Database can monitor quality of fracture-related surgery, surgeons' experience level and extent of supervision

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of supervision and of surgeons' level of experience in relation to patient outcome have been demonstrated in both hip fracture and arthroplasty surgery. The aim of this study was to describe the surgeons' experience level and the extent of supervision for: 1) fracture-related surgery in general; 2) the three most frequent primary operations and reoperations; and 3) primary operations during and outside regular working hours.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A total of 9,767 surgical procedures were identified from the Danish Fracture Database (DFDB). Procedures were grouped based on the surgeons' level of experience, extent of supervision, type (primary, planned secondary or reoperation), classification (AO Müller), and whether they were performed during or outside regular hours.

RESULTS

Interns and junior residents combined performed 46% of all procedures. A total of 90% of surgeries by interns were performed under supervision, whereas 32% of operations by junior residents were unsupervised. Supervision was absent in 14-16% and 22-33% of the three most frequent primary procedures and reoperations when performed by interns and junior residents, respectively. The proportion of unsupervised procedures by junior residents grew from 30% during to 40% ($p < 0.001$) outside regular hours.

CONCLUSIONS

Interns and junior residents together performed almost half of all fracture-related surgery. The extent of supervision was generally high; however, a third of the primary procedures performed by junior residents were unsupervised. The extent of unsupervised surgery performed by junior residents was significantly higher outside regular hours.

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