

R1 R2 R3 PG0 PG1 Estagiário Tecnólogo
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Service (sector) Trauma N° CEP

PATTERNS OF EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS IN A BRAZILIAN TERTIARY OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SERVICE

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PURPOSE: To characterize the patterns of visits to the Emergency Room (ER) of a public Brazilian tertiary ophthalmological service.

METHODS: A retrospective analysis was done on the records of 15,729 consecutive patients who presented with eye complaints to the ER of the São Paulo Hospital between February and September 2001. Data regarding gender, age and diagnosis were collected. Diagnoses were classified according to the International Classification of Diseases (10th version).

RESULTS: From a total of 15,729 patients, 8,121 (51.63%) patients were female. We found 1,019 (6.48%) trauma-related visits, from which 764 patients (74.98%) were male. More than half of the patients were included in two age groups: older than 65 y.o. (4,186, 26.61%) and between 31 and 50 y.o. (4,062, 25.82%). The most frequently found diagnosis were: Non-Specified (NS) Conjunctivitis (2,817, 17.91%), NS Post-Surgical Conditions (2,235, 14.21%), Corneal Foreign Body (1,533, 9.75%), NS Signs and Symptoms (1,215, 7.72%), Conjunctival Foreign Body (855, 5.43%), Hordeolum (696, 4.42%), NS Glaucoma (654, 4.16%), Ametropia (537, 3.41%), NS Keratitis (495, 3.15%) and Blunt Ocular Trauma (432, 2.75%).

CONCLUSIONS: Public ERs in Brazil provide a large amount of health care, with a wide range of diagnosis, many of which are not considered "real" urgencies or emergencies. Ophthalmic care is no exception to this rule, as shown in our results. In order to optimize the pattern of visits of a tertiary center as São Paulo Hospital, organization of a more effective referral chain is of paramount importance.