

## Supplementary Material

### **Patients' reasons for leaving an emergency department without being seen: results from a survey-based cohort study during the COVID-19 pandemic**

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**Table S1.** Australasian Triage Scale

| <b>Australasian Triage Scale Category</b> | <b>Treatment Acuity<br/>Maximum waiting time for medical assessment and treatment</b> |
|---|---|
| 1   | Immediate   |
| 2   | 10 minutes  |
| 3   | 30 minutes  |
| 4   | 60 minutes  |
| 5   | 120 minutes   |

Reference: Australian College for Emergency Medicine: Policy on the Australasian Triage Scale V5 (P06). West Melbourne: Australia; 2023. Available at [https://acem.org.au/getmedia/484b39f1-7c99-427b-b46e-005b0cd6ac64/Policy\\_on\\_the\\_Australasian\\_Triage\\_Scale](https://acem.org.au/getmedia/484b39f1-7c99-427b-b46e-005b0cd6ac64/Policy_on_the_Australasian_Triage_Scale) [verified 14 October 2024].

**File S1.** Script for telephone survey

**Introduction and consent:**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, a doctor from the X Hospital. I'm calling because you recently attended the Emergency Department, and we believe you left before receiving care from a doctor. I realise your expectations were probably not met on that day, but we are conducting some research to find out what needs to be improved. I would like to ask you some survey questions about how your health has been after you left hospital, and if you have been able to find other medical attention. Usually, this survey takes about 5 minutes, but sometimes it might take longer. Taking part in this study is voluntary and will not affect your current or future care at the X Hospital. Are you happy to continue?

Verbal consent - yes / no.

Thank you for your involvement.

Firstly, can I confirm with you your details

- i. [Full name]
- ii. [Date of birth]
- iii. [Address]

**Survey questions:**

1. What was the main reason you chose to attend the hospital rather than other services such as your GP?

Would you say it was mostly:

- a. you were seriously ill
- b. you were referred to hospital by a healthcare professional
- c. your GP was not available
- d. you didn't think your GP could help
- e. another reason

2. Could you tell me the main reason why you left the Emergency Department?

Would you say it was mostly:

- a. the waiting time to be seen by a doctor
- b. how crowded the waiting room was
- c. the time of day
- d. reassurance by the triage nurse
- e. symptoms got better
- f. another reason

3. Did you continue to be unwell after leaving the ED?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. unsure

4. Did you come back to the X Emergency Department? Or attend another hospital? Or go to a GP?

- a. returned to X ED

- b. went to another ED
- c. no follow up
- d. other

5. Have you been admitted to a hospital ward in the last week?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. unsure

6. If a GP was available at the time you left the ED, would you have been happy to be seen by them, rather than within the ED?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. unsure

7. Has this experience changed your likelihood of returning to the ED in future if you are unwell? Are you more / less / just as likely to attend?

- a. more likely
- b. the same likelihood
- c. less likely
- d. unsure

Thank you for your time. We hope the results of this survey will improve the care we provide.

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**Contacts for patients with ongoing needs/concerns:**

GP contact details

Ambulance Victoria - 000

Consumer engagement office – number

X mental health triage – 1300 859 789

Lifeline – 13 11 14

Research complaints officer - number