

Hospitals ranked for emergency medicine quality

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Report found patients admitted through the best ERs had significantly lower death rates.

(HealthDay) -- Patients admitted to the top hospitals for emergency medicine in the United States have a nearly 42 percent lower death rate than those admitted to other hospitals in the nation, according to a new report.

If all hospitals performed at the same level as the top-ranked hospitals, nearly 171,000 more people in the United States might have survived their emergency hospitalization between 2008 and 2010, according to HealthGrades, an independent provider of consumer information about doctors and hospitals.

Researchers analyzed more than 7 million Medicare patient records from 2008 to 2010. The patients were admitted to the hospital through the emergency department for the following diagnoses: bowel obstruction,

[chronic obstructive pulmonary disease](#), diabetic acidosis and coma, gastrointestinal bleed, heart attack, [heart failure](#), pancreatitis, pneumonia, pulmonary embolism, [respiratory failure](#), sepsis or stroke.

The report also found that emergency-room admissions for heart attack decreased 1.7 percent between 2008 and 2010, while admissions for stroke increased 2.2 percent. It also found that more than 61 percent of [hospital admissions](#) among seniors begin in the emergency department, the highest of all age groups.

The 10 cities with the lowest risk-adjusted death rates for patients admitted through the [emergency department](#) were: Milwaukee; Phoenix-Scottsdale, Ariz.; Cincinnati; West Palm Beach, Fla.; Baltimore; Traverse City, Mich.; Dayton, Ohio; Cleveland; Fargo, N.D.; and Detroit.

"It is imperative that anyone experiencing a medical emergency go directly to the closest hospital, especially in the event of a heart attack or stroke," report author Dr. Arshad Rahim, director of accelerated clinical excellence at HealthGrades, said in a company news release.

"That said, our study findings show the care you receive once admitted to the hospital can also make the difference between life and death," Dr. Rahim added. "We encourage all patients to educate themselves about the quality of emergency medical providers in their area and to choose a top-performing hospital whenever there is a choice."

More information: The U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality advises you to [do your homework before choosing a hospital](#).

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