

Will urgent care facility benefit more from additional GP or nurse?

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More and more hospitals and general practitioners in the Netherlands are collaborating in urgent care facilities: a single point of contact (instead of two) for acute patient care outside office hours. Depending on the patient's medical needs upon intake, he will be referred to the hospital's emergency room or to the GP. This makes healthcare in the Netherlands more efficient, cheaper and better. Scientists at the University of Twente's CTIT research institute have developed a simulation model which gives insight into patient waiting times and the utilization of available equipment and treatment rooms. The simulation model helps the urgent care facility make better choices.

The University of Twente has developed a [simulation model](#) for the urgent care facility at the ZGT hospital in the city of Almelo. The model calculates patient flows and [processing times](#), providing facility staff with valuable information. It shows that the introduction of the urgent care facility in Almelo has resulted in shorter [waiting times](#) for all patients. In addition, patients with acute problems receive appropriate care more rapidly.

Additional GP or nurse?

In addition, the simulation model can be used to help facility staff make important choices. Dr Martijn Mes, one of the scientists involved, explains: "For example, is it more advantageous to have an extra GP or an extra nurse on hand - or both - when the facility gets busy? What

effect does this choice have on patient flows and processing times? Thanks to the model, we sometimes arrive at decisions that are different than what we initially expected."

Practice session

It is important that everyone involved in the urgent care facility's operations must recognize the added value of the simulation model. Dr Mes continues: "Staff will be more likely to understand certain choices and provide input if they understand how the model works. So we organized a practice session with the doctors and hospital administrators. This gave them the opportunity for some hands-on practice with the model. For example, they could see for themselves how extra staff might impact the operations of the urgent care facility. It also made clear what happens when more patients visit the facility. How can they effectively deal with the increase in patient numbers? It was nice to see that the participants came up with ideas right away for improving the facility's efficiency."

Provided by University of Twente

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