

# Research shows patient satisfaction can be high, even in emergency care situations

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The Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation (MHIF) today announced the results of survey research aimed at discovering patient and family satisfaction with acute care transfers for patients with STEMI (ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction), a severe heart attack best treated quickly with specialized care. The results, based on 98 patient and 80 family surveys, suggest that patient satisfaction with care decisions and communication can be high, even in emergency care situations that require rapid and complex decision making and, in this case, quick transport to a different hospital for a critically ill patient for whom family may not be present.

For STEMI patients transferred from a Minnesota rural or community hospital to Abbott Northwestern Hospital for specialized care between March 2007 and June 2008, researchers found a significant majority of patients (97%) and their families (99%) felt that transfer for care was necessary. Patients (95%) and families (88%) also reported that the process for transfer was well explained, and 96% of patients understood the reason for transfer. Despite this understanding, 15% of patients and 11% of families would have preferred the patient stay at their local healthcare facility.

"As public health professionals, so much of what we do is data driven, and up until now there has been limited data regarding how patients feel about emergent transfer from up to 200 miles away," states Jason T. Henry, BS, lead author, current medical student, and MHIF intern. "This study helps validate that the wishes of patients and their families are

congruent with what we feel is the best medical care, despite circumstances that may be inconvenient."

The Minneapolis Heart Institute at Abbott Northwestern Hospital established a regional network for transfer of patients with STEMI in 2003, enabling patients to be quickly transferred for percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI), which is the preferred treatment for patients with STEMI. This model has been replicated nationally and applied to other cardiovascular emergencies. The study findings are important because patient satisfaction is considered an important component of quality health care. Outcomes and communication between the patient, the caregivers, and the health care team are two factors that can impact satisfaction levels. In this study, researchers looked at patients' and families' experiences in a situation where optimal care for the patient had the potential to put strain on the patient and his or her family.

**More information:** *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*  
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