

New research could help would-be emergency room patients

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New research funded by the British Red Cross and carried out by UWE Bristol (the University of the West of England) and the University of Bristol aims to discover what information will help people know what to do and where to go when a person is unwell.

The Red Cross helps people in crisis and has a long history of providing

support. They are keen to explore whether learning first aid might help people to feel better equipped to understand, cope and take action.

The number of people attending A&E departments has increased over recent years. An estimated 22.4 million people attended A&E in England in 2014/15, equivalent to about 1600 more each day, compared to the year before [according to a parliamentary briefing](#). This research will discover whether tailored first aid education from the Red Cross might support current and future users of urgent healthcare services, so that people receive the help they need in the most appropriate setting.

The researchers will speak to a wide range of people attending A&E departments, minor injuries units and walk-in centres in Bristol during the summer to gather information. They will also talk to doctors, nurses, paramedics and other staff, and look at policies and current information relating to the services.

Dr Julie Mytton, Associate Professor for Child Health at UWE Bristol, who is leading the study says, "We need to understand why people choose to go to an A&E or a minor injuries unit. We have seen a steady increase in those attending A&E and we know that some groups, such as parents of young children, those with long term conditions and their carers often seek [support](#) through A&E departments, but we don't know if there could be additional information that might help them seek appropriate help through other routes. For example, the parents of a young child with a fever or a rash might attend A&E, but they could also get advice and treatment from their pharmacist or GP.

"This research is not to tell people where to go, but about providing information and help at the point it is needed. First aid or self-care [information](#) might be of benefit to certain groups, but how and where to target this is what we need the research to tell us. We are really pleased to be working with the British Red Cross to understand better the needs

of patients and carers in emergency situations. We also believe that what we find could help the urgent care services too."

Joe Mulligan, Head of First Aid Education at the British Red Cross, said, "We want to understand how first aid education can become more integral to public health. This research will help us understand how we can build people's confidence in their ability to treat minor injuries effectively at home and potentially reduce pressures on A&E departments."

Three researchers from the University of Bristol's Centre for Academic Primary Care (Dr Helen Baxter, Dr Matthew Booker and Dr Leah Bowen) are working on the project with Dr Mytton.

This research project is the result of a collaboration between two Bristol Health Partners Health Integration Teams (HITs). These are groups of professionals, practitioners, commissioners, academics, patients and the public who come together around a particular health topic to improve the [health](#) outcomes for that group. This project involves the [Child Injury Prevention and Injury Care](#) (CIPIC) HIT, and the [Avoiding Hospital Admissions](#) (ITHAcA) HIT.

David Relph, Director of Bristol Health Partners said, "Health Integration Teams – or HITs – are all about getting [people](#) working together for positive results. This is a really important piece of work that could make a real difference to our overstretched urgent care services. The fact that two of our HITs are working together with the Red Cross to get this vital project going is particularly heartening."

Provided by University of Bristol

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