

The National Emergency Medicine Programme



**A strategy to improve safety, quality, access and value
in Emergency Medicine in Ireland**

Welcome to our EMP 2022 Newsletter, where we take a look at a selection of initiatives from the Programme and note the Annual Scientific Meeting of the IAEM. We are all currently feeling the pressure of increasing numbers of patients seeking ED care and hospital crowding. At this time of year, it often feels like the day-to-day pressures of service delivery dominates everything but, as “they” say: “*if nothing changes, nothing changes*”. So, when the EMP provided input to the 3-year Unscheduled Care Improvement Programme, we agreed to prioritise the care of older patients in their ED journey. An overview of the working group chaired by Rosa McNamara is outlined below.

There is progress in other areas of EMP participation, including ongoing work to support the implementation of Trauma Networks in Ireland, the Acute Floor Information System and Activity Based Funding in Unscheduled Care. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the publication of the model of care for Emergency Medicine in Ireland and next year will see a review and update of that document in light of the current landscape of healthcare in Ireland and the planned implementation of Regional Health Authorities (RHAs).

This Christmas, as always, staff in EDs and many other areas of healthcare will continue delivering healthcare without interruption to our patients 24/7/365. We hope that staff will stay safe and well as they carry out their work and manage to have some time for a well-deserved celebration. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the EMP

Gerry McCarthy, Clinical Lead, National Emergency Medicine Programme (emp@rcsi.ie)

Short Life Working Group on the implementation of triage changes for older persons

A Short Life Working Group (SLWG) was convened to provide expert advice on the implementation of proposed refinements to the current triage process and define post-triage care for older persons who present to EDs. The Chair of the group is Dr Rosa McNamara, Consultant in Emergency Medicine (EM) at St. Vincent’s University Hospital. The SLWG includes representatives from nursing and medical EM teams, an Occupational Therapist with a special interest in Geriatric EM and representatives from the EMP.

The work describes an expert consensus in relation to the optimal pathways of care for older patients in the ED. Many older persons who seek care in the ED will be assessed, treated and safely discharged. Avoidable delays in the ED journey is particularly associated with risk of deterioration in the older person. A feature of this new way of working is an expedited pathway for those patients who are assessed as needing admission to hospital. Where further diagnostic testing and specialty consultations will not clearly affect the disposition plan (emergency admission), the patient should not have to wait in the ED for these to be performed.

It is intended that the process changes described in this paper for ED will flow seamlessly with the work of the “Integrated NCAGL AO and OP body of work on Older Adults with Frailty in Acute Hospitals” and correspond with the wider changes in the acute hospital setting.

Activity Based Funding (ABF) for EDs

Activity within EDs in Ireland is historically block funded. There is insufficient appropriate activity data available to classify ED care for ABF at present. The implementation of ABF in EDs is part of both the ABF Implementation Plan 2021-2023 and Sláintecare Implementation Strategy. Much work has been done in recent years to move away from block funding and annual budgeting of health services towards multiannual budgeting and ABF.

Since 2016, the Healthcare Pricing Office (HPO) has been working with the Emergency Medicine Programme to determine a means to classify ED activity, as a means of facilitating the implementation of ABF. Following a review of international systems for funding ED activity, it was agreed that Ireland will adopt the Australian Urgency Related Group (URG) classification system developed by the Australian Independent Hospital Pricing Authority for ED activity. This year, a feasibility study at the ED in Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore (MRHT), successfully generated appropriate diagnostic data for all ED attendances, using Integrated Patient Management System (IPMS) for the recording of diagnosis codes.

An “Exit Diagnosis & Activity Based Funding in ED” Webinar was held on 15th June, focusing on four key areas:

- The Story of ABF in Emergency Medicine in Ireland
- ABF the Wider Perspective
- The Journey towards ABF in Emergency Care
- Next Steps

A recording of the Webinar can be viewed here: <https://emnow.ie/home-page/emp/events/>

Many thanks to Dr Tom McMahon (ASPIRE Fellow), Prof Robert Eager, MRHT and Brian, Emer and Fiachra in the HPO for all their work on this project

Uplift in Funded Substantive Posts of Consultants in Emergency Medicine

As an important component of the multifaceted approach to improving patient care in EDs, Minister Stephen Donnelly allocated funding for 51 new posts of Consultant in Emergency Medicine, the locations of which were advised by HSE Acute Operations and EMP, aligning them with recommendations in the Implementation of Trauma Networks in Ireland, the Model of Care of EMP and, particularly, the need for EDs outside of Dublin to appoint Consultants with specific expertise in the areas of Paediatric Emergency Medicine and Emergency Care of the Older Person. These are most welcome and the support of many within the HSE, Department of Health, Hospitals and Hospital Groups and the Consultant Appointments Advisory Committee (CAAC) is gratefully acknowledged in supporting an expedited approval process while ensuring all usual correct procedures have been followed.

Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV)

DSGBV refers to the use of physical, emotional force or threat of physical force, including sexual violence in close adult relationships. Domestic Violence includes violence perpetrated by a spouse, partner, son, daughter or any other person who has a close relationship or lives with the victim.

The term ‘domestic violence’ goes beyond physical violence and can also involve emotional abuse; the destruction of property; isolation from friends, family and other potential sources of support; threats to others including children; stalking; and control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone. Emotional abuse is considered the “worst thing” by nearly half of those severely abused. Two years ago, Dr. Niamh Collins, Consultant in Emergency Medicine in Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown, played a central role in identifying a patient who was subject to coercive control and supporting them in their recovery.

Following this, a collaboration between the Emergency Medicine Programme (EMP), staff in the Mercy University, Cork University and Connolly Hospitals has developed a standardised approach to screen for and respond to a person indicating that they are experiencing DSGBV in their life. The collaboration has mapped out an algorithm and proposal for training of all ED Staff from General Staff Awareness to Champions to Medical Social workers.

An abstract of this project was presented at the National Clinical Programmes Day (7th October).

Please click here to view: <https://emnow.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/EMP-DSGBV-Poster-v3-ac2.pdf>

Emergency Department Better Data, Better Planning (BDBP)

The BDBP is a multi-centre, cross-sectional study to assess appropriateness of attendances at five EDs nationally. It aimed to develop a profile of ED attendees from across rural and urban EDs to examine appropriate and avoidable ED attendees by profiling the types of patients who attended 5 EDs over a 24 hour period and developing a consensus between providers across healthcare settings about the necessity, appropriateness of those attendances.

Recruitment occurred at a selection of urban and rural EDs in Ireland throughout 2020 (University Hospital Limerick, University Hospital Kerry, St. James's Hospital, St. Vincent's University Hospital, Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore). At each site all adults presenting over a 24hr census period were eligible, with those who were deemed too unwell or lacking in capacity to consent excluded prior to interview.

Demographics differed significantly between ED sites in terms of age ($p \leq 0.05$), socioeconomic status ($p \leq 0.001$), and proximity of health services ($p \leq 0.001$). Prior to ED attendance, 64% of participants had accessed community health services. Most participants (70%) believed the ED was the "best place" for emergency care or attended due to lack of awareness of other services (30%). Musculoskeletal injuries were the most common reason for presentation to the ED in this study (24%) and almost a third of patients (31%) reported presenting to the ED for an x-ray or scan.

(Cummins NM, Garavan C, Barry LA, Devlin C, Corey G, Cummins F, Ryan D, McCarthy G, Galvin R. The impact of COVID-19 on an Irish Emergency Department (ED): a cross-sectional study exploring the factors influencing ED utilisation prior to and during the pandemic from the patient perspective. BMC Emerg Med. 2022 Nov 2;22(1):176. doi: 10.1186/s12873-022-00720-7. PMID: 36324084; PMCID: PMC9628103.)

Emergency Nursing 2022

2022 has been a tough year for healthcare as it emerges from the pandemic years. Attendances have continued to increase with a projected 1.45m attending Emergency Departments and 145,000 attending Injury Units during 2022. Staffing in Emergency Departments (EDs) has been challenging due to a higher turnover which has significantly impacted the skill-mix in many sites. Despite these challenges Emergency Nursing continues to be an attractive career choice, with an increasing number of specialist roles being developed.

• Safe Nurse Staffing & Skill Mix

In June the [Report on Safe Staffing and Skill Mix](#) in Adult Emergency Care Settings in Ireland was launched by the Minister for Health, Mr Stephen Donnelly. It recommends the delivery of care by a team consisting of 85% Registered Nurses and 15% Health Care Assistants. Following the release of the initial funding package, meetings have commenced with Local Implementation Groups to address staffing requirement of individual services.



- **Staff profile survey**

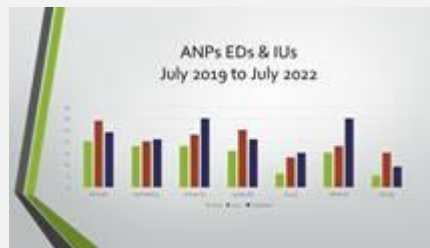
The survey was developed in November 2021 by the EMP Working Group to collect information and data from all EDs and Injury Units (IUs) pertaining to workforce, support and infrastructural resources. It was a repeat of the surveys undertaken in November 2010 and 2011. High-level findings were presented of the ED and IU Nursing and Healthcare Assistant Staff Profile & Education Survey 2021 were presented at the IAEM ASM in October.

An online tool for the annual collection of nursing data will be developed in 2023.

- **Advanced Nurse Practitioners EDs/IUs in 2022**

This year has seen a welcome expansion in the numbers of ANP/cANP (candidate ANP) posts in EDs and IUs around the country. This has been largely due to the increased funding and drive to meet the target in phase 2 of the Safe Staffing Framework whereby the objective is to reduce Patient Experience Time (PET) in emergency care settings and increase the Advanced Nurse / Midwifery Practitioners (ANMP) numbers to 2.3% of the nursing workforce. This is a follow on from the Department of Health [publication](#) last year, where the benefits and excellence of ANP practice were recognised.

Initial recommendations for ANP numbers in EDs were made in 2013, at a time when the Injury Unit Model of Care was in its infancy. Some EDs have exceeded this initial projection, while others have not yet achieved it, in part due to retirements, secondments, new roles etc. This highlights the need for robust succession planning. Some new posts have been funded since the number of ANPs was collated in July of this year (see table below) so we will re-examine this data early in 2023. We welcome the appointment of a small number of cANPs in the area of children presenting to EDs and are looking to join in the development of a job specification for ANPs in Paediatric Emergency Medicine.



The ANP forum has continued despite the challenges of the pandemic and the migration of key members to other areas. We plan on holding a face to face meeting in Spring 2023.

Self-Referral Web Application “MyEmergency”

When Patients present at an ED or IU, they are asked over 60 questions in order to register. This takes time and leads to queues at registration, before triage.

‘MyEmergency’ is being designed to enable the prospective patient to complete a series of questions, using a mobile phone app (assuming they are well enough to do so), allowing an expedited validation process when they arrive at the ED. Once the patient submits the form, the information is sent to a central location, where the ED/IU medical personnel can review the data in advance, enabling identification of alternative pathways of care in some cases.

Work is currently underway to transfer the data collected from the app to iPMS.

EMP at the World Ploughing Championship (21st September)

The EMP joined the HSE Live Team at the National Ploughing Championships on 21st September in Ratheniska, Co Laois. The EMP Team interacted with about 1,000 of the 115,000 attendees, promoting Injury Units, initial treatments for common injuries and measuring blood pressures where requested. The sun shone for the day facilitating some of the demonstrations taking place outside the marquee.



Siobhan Daly (Mallow IU), Siobhan O'Connor (Mallow IU), Dona Cromar (Roscommon IU), Fiona McDaid (EMP)



Lisa Robinson (Mater)



Fiona McDaid (EMP), Siobhan Daly (Mallow IU), Siobhan O'Connor (Mallow IU), Dona Cromar (Roscommon IU), Eileen O'Connor (St John's IU)

IAEM 2022 (20th & 21st October)

This year's Irish Association for Emergency Medicine Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) was held in the Slieve Russell Hotel with the theme of "Sex, Drugs, Rock 'n' Roll & the Law". It was a great opportunity to catch up with friends & colleagues after two years of virtual conferences. The Emergency Nursing session was well attended with attendees from across the spectrum on emergency care. The winner of the Valerie Small Excellence in Emergency Nursing Bursary was Natasha Duffy from the Emergency Department in Letterkenny University Hospital for her presentation LUH ISBAR patient handover to ol for patients transferred from ED unaccompanied by a nurse to the ward.

In other proceedings at the ASM, the Trainees' Award for Trainer of the Year went to Dr. Jonathan Costello, Consultant in Emergency Medicine in Cork. Mr. Hugh Flood won the Prof. Conor Egleston Prize for designing a valve to reduce the risk of urethral trauma during catheterization. Dr. Kasia Domanska won the prize for the Best Moderated Poster, Orla Coleman won the Student Prize for Best Poster. The ED Team from Tallaght University Hospital emerged the winners of the SimWars Competition, various rounds of which had run throughout the Conference in a thrilling final, the final result of which was very close, with the ED Team from Sligo University Hospital finishing as runner-up. The Leo Vella lecture was delivered by Mr. Sean Walsh, Consultant in Paediatric Emergency Medicine, CHI Crumlin. At the AGM, Prof. Conor Deasy, having been President-elect since his election in 2021, became President, taking over office from Mr. Fergal Hickey. Congratulations to all.

Photos from IAEM ASM 2022-“Sex, Drugs, Rock ‘n’ Roll & the Law”



Other Documents and Resources

- 2020 – 2021: Years like no other. Emergency Medicine in Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic.
<https://emnow.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Emergency-Medicine-in-Ireland-During-the-Covid-19-Pandemic-Years-Like-No-Other.pdf>
- Updated Guideline on patients who Leave Before Completion of Treatment was published.
<https://emnow.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/LBCT-Guidance-Jun22.pdf>
- Recommendations and justification for **Clinical Pharmacist** and **Medical Social Worker** in Emergency Departments published.
- <https://emnow.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/MSW-Recommendation-Justification-circulated-November-2022.pdf>
- <https://emnow.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Recommendation-and-justification-for-Clinical-Pharmacist-in-Emergency-Departments-Circulated-November-2022.pdf>
- Draft Guideline for the assessment and management of adult patients with **suspected or confirmed eating disorders** in the emergency department has been developed by Aileen McCabe in Tallaght University Hospital and will be published shortly.
- ED and IU Nursing and Health Care Assistant Staff Profile & Education Survey 2021.
- Clinician Consensus on **“Inappropriate” Presentations** to the Emergency Department: A Cross-sectional Multi-centre Study of Emergency Department Utilisation in Ireland. Published by UHL.
https://emnow.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Clinician_Consensus_on_Inappropriate_Presentations.pdf

All EMP Documents and Resources can be accessed on EMNOW.

<https://emnow.ie/wordpress/home-page/emp/>

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