FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE PATTERN OF ATTENDANCE OF PATIENTS AT THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ED) AT CARLETONVILLE HOSPITAL

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, in the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of

Masters of Family Medicine

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Declaration

I, Dr. Misael Fernandez Silva declare that this research report is the result of my own work. It has been submitted for the degree of Masters in Family Medicine, to the University of Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg. This research has never been submitted before for any other examination or degree at any other institution or University.

An approval from the Ethics Committee for Research on Human Subjects (Medical) was obtained upon submission, and the approval number is **M080547**.

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Dr. Misael Fernandez Silva

On this 7 day of October 2011

To my wife and children for their inspiration

on furthering

my career

Abstract

Aim: to describe the pattern of attendance from patients to the Emergency Department (ED) at Carletonville Hospital and explanations for the pattern.

Methods: The study used a descriptive cross sectional design, exploring the patient's demographics, clinical domain, factors related to patients and the system, in 250 participants.

Results: The typical attendee was either a female or a male, in the age group of 14 to 28 years, unemployed (60.2 %), having medical problems (30.0 %), coming during afterhours (78.8 %), using an ambulance for transportation (51.2 %) and residing in Khutsong (31.6 %). Eighty seven percent reported their problems as serious, but were coded as green (59.6 %) in the triage tool, and 79.2% were discharged after the visit.

Conclusions: Need exist for educating the local community in the use of the ED, and attending other local health resources like clinics and general practitioners. Further studies are required to explore the appropriateness of ED use and help seeking behaviour of the local community.

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