

Title: Screening Admitted Patients for Palliative Care Needs in the Emergency Department

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Problem Statement: Early palliative care (PC) consultation from the emergency department (ED) for admitted patients leads to improved patient outcomes. A seamless screening tool to trigger an ED PC consult is challenging due to the ED's unique workflow.

Background: Research on ED PC referrals demonstrates benefit in patient care, length of stay, and hospital costs.¹ The Palliative Care and Rapid Emergency Screening tool, a proposed algorithm to identify ED patients with unmet PC needs,² would not be utilized at our hospital due to its complexity and time constraints.

Purpose: This quality improvement project's purpose is to increase ED PC referrals by developing a feasible, simple screening tool that identifies admitted patients who would benefit from PC consultation.

Methods: A new screening tool was developed and implemented on August 1, 2022. ED staff education occurred from July-October 2022. Data were obtained on consults from August-October 2022 as compared to May-July 2022.

Findings: While data are limited, there is a clear trend towards increased consults. Three months after tool implementation, the consult rate increased by 8% on average.

2022	May	June	July	August	Sept	October
Number of PC consults < 1 day	65	48	61	95	75	93
Total number of PC consults	115	99	107	160	124	140
Percentage	56.5%	48.5%	57%	59.4%	60.5%	66.4%

Practice Implications: The ED is in a unique position to identify appropriate admitted patients that would benefit from PC. Its complex workflow interferes with providing this invaluable service. A brief, simple screening tool increases ED PC consults for admitted patients. Further data must be obtained over time to ensure the validity of this tool.

¹ Denney CJ, Duan Y, O'Brien PB, et al. An Emergency Department Clinical Algorithm to Increase Palliative Care Consultation: Pilot Project. *J Palliat Med.* Dec 2021;24(12):1776-1782. <http://doi.org/10.1089/jpm.2020.0750>.

² Bowman J, George N, Barrett N, et al. Acceptability and reliability of a novel palliative care screening tool among emergency department providers. *Acad Emerg Med.* 2016;23(6):694-702. doi: 10.1111/acem.12963.