



QUALITY OF LIFE, QUALITY OF CARE, AND PATIENT SAFETY

## DERMATOLOGY REFERRALS FROM THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AT A TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL

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**Introduction:** Few studies have characterized dermatologic emergency department (ED) presentations. The impact and timeliness of dermatologic consultation is also poorly understood.

**Objective:** To describe characteristics of dermatology referrals received from the ED and to evaluate the ED diagnostic accuracy and time interval to dermatologic consultation.

**Materials and Methods:** Retrospective chart review of outpatients referred to the dermatology service by a tertiary hospital ED in Ontario, Canada from January to December 2016.

**Results:** 129 ED referrals (64% female, 36% male, with median age 57 years) and 101 dermatology charts were reviewed. The most common referrals were rash (23%), infection (20%), and dermatitis (15%); the most common dermatology diagnoses were dermatitis (31%), urticaria (7%) and vasculitis (6%). Overall ED diagnostic accuracy rate was 41%. 33% of ED diagnoses were non-specific/descriptive. 31% of presenting concerns were acute, and 22% chronic. 51% of patients were seen by dermatology within one week.

**Conclusions:** ED and dermatology diagnostic concordance was low, many referrals non-emergent, and a substantial proportion of patients presented to the ED with chronic concerns. These findings warrant increased ED dermatologic training and patient education to optimize resources and improve care.

