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David S. Kroll, Jennifer Karno, Brian Mullen, Sejal B.
Shah, Daniel J. Pallin, David F. Gitlin



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Clinical severity alone does not determine disposition decisions for patients in the Emergency Department with suicide risk

David S. Kroll, MD^{a,e}; Jennifer Karno, MSW, LICSW^{a,b}; Brian Mullen, PhD^c; Sejal B. Shah, MD^{a,e}; Daniel J. Pallin, MD^{d,e}; David F. Gitlin, MD^{a,e}

a. Department of Psychiatry, Brigham and Women's Hospital, 75 Francis Street, Boston, MA 02115, USA

b. Division of Social Work, Brigham and Women's Hospital, 75 Francis Street, Boston, MA 02115, USA

c. Brigham Digital Innovation Hub, Brigham Health, 75 Francis Street, Boston, MA 02115, USA

d. Department of Emergency Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital, 75 Francis Street, Boston, MA 02115, USA

e. Harvard Medical School, 250 Longwood Ave, Boston, MA 02115, USA

Corresponding author: David S. Kroll, MD, dskroll@bwh.harvard.edu

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ABSTRACT

Background: Boarding of patients with suicide risk in emergency departments (EDs) negatively impacts both patients and society. Factors other than clinical severity may frequently preclude safe outpatient dispositions among suicidal patients boarding for psychiatric admission in the ED.

Objective: To determine the extent to which non-clinical factors preclude safe outpatient discharge from the ED among patients boarding for psychiatric admission on the basis of suicide risk.

Methods: A survey regarding the importance of 13 clinical and 19 non-clinical barriers to safe outpatient disposition was administered in the ED to 40 adults who were determined by psychiatrists to require inpatient level of psychiatric care due to suicide risk. A second survey regarding whether addressing the

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