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Letter

Is a two-tiered prehospital response system which engages an emergency physician

relevant for less emergent patients? Preliminary data from an observational study with

the Paris Fire Brigade

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One of the estimators of the quality of the prehospital emergency care chain is the

ability to refer a patient to the correct hospital department. The latest study on the subject in

France dates back to 2006 [1]. The French prehospital emergency medical system is a two-

tiered response system: a basic life support (BLS) tier served by three to five professional

rescuers who are most often firefighters, and an advanced life support (ALS) tier served by

ambulance teams comprising an emergency physician (EP) and a nurse. The intermediate

level (paramedics or emergency medical technicians) does not exist as an autonomous

emergency facilitator in France.

In Paris, the two levels of care, as much ALS as BLS, are provided in large part by the

Fire Brigade of Paris (BSPP), which serves a population of over 6.5 million inhabitants. In

2015, the BLS teams from the BSPP provided more than 400,000 instances of care with a

reinforcement by an ALS team from the BSPP in more than 10,000 cases. Once the patient

has been examined on site by the ALS team, and in the absence of any sign of a serious

condition, he can be transported by the BLS team to the nearby Emergency Department (ED).

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