

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Patients presenting to an acute general hospital with acute mental health needs. A retrospective observational cohort study.
AUTHORS	Cann, Johnathon; Barter, Reece; Battle, Joseph; Schwenck, Jonas; Anakwe, Raymond

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Gábor Gazdag Semmelweis University
REVIEW RETURNED	21-Dec-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Cann J et al.: Patients presenting to an acute general hospital with acute mental health needs. A retrospective observational cohort study.</p> <p>This is a retrospective observational study of acute psychiatric patients presenting in emergency departments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Number and diagnoses of patients presented in different phases of the pandemic were compared. Altogether 4.2% of all patients were in acute psychiatric condition and there was another 4.2% with a co-morbid psychiatric condition. As acute psychiatric patients had a similar waiting time as those with physical symptoms, authors conclude that it 'does not suggest that mental and physical care are well integrated and suggest that there are opportunities to improve the quality of care and experience for these patients. The study is well designed. Appropriate statistics were used. Results were moderately interpreted.</p> <p>Minor comments to improve the quality of the manuscript:</p> <p>Page 13, last sentence of the 1st paragraph: something went wrong with the punctuation of this sentence.</p> <p>Page 13, last paragraph: authors argue here that long waiting time of patients presenting with acute mental disorders is an indicator of inappropriate managing of these cases. This may be the case, but I would also mention that patients presenting with acute psychiatric symptoms may need similar physical examinations ruling out somatic base of the symptoms and these examinations can be time consuming. From the other hand one may argue that patients presenting with acute mental symptoms may deserve priority in emergency departments.</p> <p>Authors should mention the limitations of the study (e.g. its retrospective nature, data collection is based on the electronic patient documentation system, psychiatric diagnoses were not always confirmed by a psychiatrist, etc.).</p>
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REVIEWER	Gunnar Morken Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Neuroscience
REVIEW RETURNED	27-Dec-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS	One of the aims of the study is differences in diagnostic profiles among the patients in the periods with lockdown, between lockdowns and before the Covid 19 pandemic and the authors have done adequate statistical tests. The authors have included 5 figures, I would like one figure that illustrates the difference between periods in diagnostic profiles better than figure 4. The variations in presentations of psychosis, self harm, suicidality and intoxication is of great interest and could be illustrated both as their relative proportion of patients presenting and changes in absolute numbers between periods.
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: 1

Dr. Gábor Gazdag, Semmelweis University

Comments to the Author:

Cann J et al.: Patients presenting to an acute general hospital with acute mental health needs. A retrospective observational cohort study.

This is a retrospective observational study of acute psychiatric patients presenting in emergency departments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Number and diagnoses of patients presented in different phases of the pandemic were compared. Altogether 4.2% of all patients were in acute psychiatric condition and there was another 4.2% with a co-morbid psychiatric condition. As acute psychiatric patients had a similar waiting time as those with physical symptoms, authors conclude that it 'does not suggest that mental and physical care are well integrated and suggest that there are opportunities to improve the quality of care and experience for these patients. The study is well designed. Appropriate statistics were used. Results were moderately interpreted.

Thank you!

Minor comments to improve the quality of the manuscript:

Page 13, last sentence of the 1st paragraph: something went wrong with the punctuation of this sentence.

Thank you. We have corrected this. (Lines 299-301).

Page 13, last paragraph: authors argue here that long waiting time of patients presenting with acute mental disorders is an indicator of inappropriate managing of these cases. This may be the case, but I would also mention that patients presenting with acute psychiatric symptoms may need similar physical examinations ruling out somatic base of the symptoms and these examinations can be time consuming. From the other hand one may argue that patients presenting with acute mental symptoms may deserve priority in emergency departments.

Thank you. We have corrected this and made it clear. We don't think that we can argue for priority for these patients on the basis of our findings so have not gone this far (Lines 296-299).

Authors should mention the limitations of the study (e.g. its retrospective nature, data collection is

based on the electronic patient documentation system, psychiatric diagnoses were not always confirmed by a psychiatrist, etc.).

Thank you. Agreed. We have made this addition explicitly in the discussion section (Lines 303-306).

Reviewer: 2

Dr. Gunnar Morken, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, St. Olavs University Hospital
Comments to the Author:

One of the aims of the study is differences in diagnostic profiles among the patients in the periods with lockdown, between lockdowns and before the Covid 19 pandemic and the authors have done adequate statistical tests. The authors have included 5 figures, I would like one figure that illustrates the difference between periods in diagnostic profiles better than figure 4. The variations in presentations of psychosis, self harm, suicidality and intoxication is of great interest and could be illustrated both as their relative proportion of patients presenting and changes in absolute numbers between periods.

Thank you for this point. We have revised figure 4 to make it more informative and to represent the information requested by the reviewer. We agree that this improves the information being given. (Figure 4)