**Why Do Caregivers Choose the Pediatric Emergency Department (PED) Over a Pediatric Acute Care Night Clinic?**

**A Qualitative Survey**

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### INTRODUCTION

- ECU offers a night clinic from 6pm-9pm located 0.5 km from the PED entrance.
- Non urgent PED comprise 50% of ED visits annually. (1)
- A study found that 86% of presenting patients had some form of insurance (5).
- One study found that 45% of parents only required history, physical, and reassurance while only 11% required intervention not located in and office/clinic setting (6).

**The Goal**
To identify reasons why parents/guardians choose PED over the acute night care clinic.

### MATERIALS & METHODS

- Eligible patients were given a 2-section survey when presenting to the ED during a 4-week period.
- **Eligibility**
  - Pediatrician participated in the night clinic.
  - Presented during night clinic hours 6pm-9pm.
  - Emergency severity index (ESI) 4 or 5 only, indicating low acuity.

### RESULTS

Parents/Guardians with lower overall education levels are more likely to take the children to the PED as opposed to a pediatric acute care clinic.

**Highest Level of Completed Education**

- <12 years: 9%
- HS diploma/GED: 47%
- Some college: 37%
- College degree: 7%

**Employment Status**

- Employed Full Time: 28%
- Employed Part Time: 43%
- Unemployed: 29%

**Primary Reason for Visiting the Pediatric Emergency Department**

- Presumed shorter wait to be seen: 41%
- Perceived severity of child’s illness: 21.4%
- Perceived shorter length of stay: 17%
- Resources available (testing/imaging): 8.6%
- Perceived quality of care: 7.1%
- Past experience with night clinic or PED: 4.3%
- PED office instructed to come to PED: 2.9%
- Cost: 0%
- Facility appearance: 0%

### DISCUSSION

- Analysis of the caregiver’s PCP revealed a large population, nearly half, who utilized the ED as their PCP which is largely attributable to their own upbringing as well as a lack of understanding of the utility of a PCP for both general exams as well as in appropriate acute illnesses.
- Caretakers that have completed less education or whose children have Medicaid suggests that health literacy may play a role in the decision to utilize the PED over the night clinic.
- Future education for caregivers regarding severity and symptoms in acute illness may facilitate more appropriate utilization of the acute care clinic over the PED.

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**REFERENCES**


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