

Think of us: Fostering collaboration to get patients to the right hospital

Sometimes patients need to receive specialised care that is not available at the hospital they first attend. Getting them to the right hospital is a critical part of the health system. However, pushback around the necessity of transfer is one of the biggest identified barriers to enabling transfers. Furthermore, finding an available bed is not always a smooth process and delays can impact patient care. We created a video designed to foster an empathetic and collaborative mindset among doctors who receive non-critical patient transfer requests from a sending hospital.

WHAT WE DID

- 1 We created a video reminding receiving doctors of their shared responsibility with sending doctors.
- 2 We tested the video's effectiveness in an interactive online study using simulated patient transfer request phone calls.
- 3 We compared the reported likelihood of accepting the patient, collaborating with the caller, and shared responsibility for the patient before and after exposure to the video in 21 emergency department doctors. We also measured receivers' perceptions of the medical case, and their empathy and feelings of closeness towards the caller.



WHAT WE FOUND

After viewing the video, emergency department doctors reported:

-  A stronger intention to accept the patient transfer.
-  They perceived the case as more severe and urgent.
-  They were more likely to accept information about the caller's ability to care for the patient.

We also found:

-  Feedback on the video was positive.
-  Positive results are likely due to something other than receivers feeling closer to the caller, as the interpersonal closeness and empathy measures did not change.

"It communicated a clear message that callers requesting transfer are not faceless people sent to try our patience on a busy day".

WHAT'S NEXT?

We recommend:

-  Exploring the scaling potential using a larger and broader sample in real-world settings.

It is recommended that resourcing issues (i.e. bed availability) are separately addressed to optimise patient transfers.

