

Ambulance Offload Delays in The Emergency Department

– Is Age and Frailty a Factor?



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board

A.J. Burgess; D. Soppitt; N. Jones; D.J Burberry; E.A. Davies

Older Person's Assessment Service (OPAS), Morriston Hospital, Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB)

Introduction - Ambulance offload delays at the Emergency Department (ED) are linked to adverse outcomes. By 2030, 25% patients attending the ED are projected to be >80 years old. Geriatric frailty syndromes can be difficult for triage systems to assess, leading to older people being allocated lower priority status and a higher chance of a 4-hour breach vs a younger patient(1). We assessed whether ambulance offload time is associated with frailty, death or re-attendance at an ED at a large regional centre.

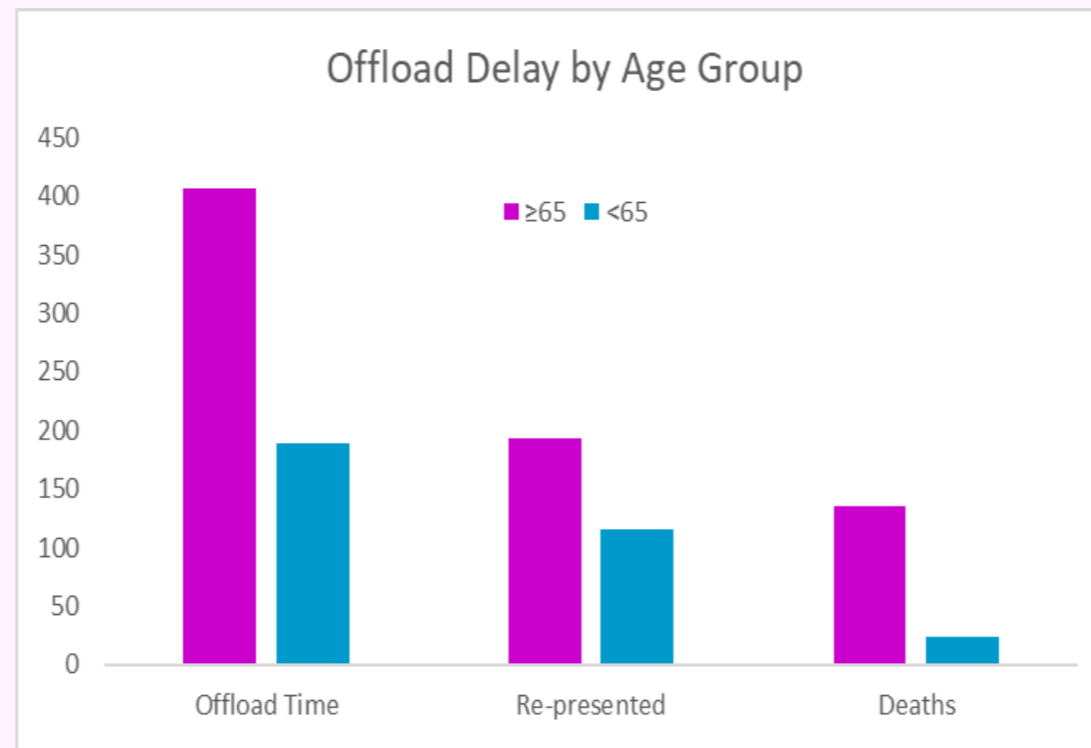
Methods - Retrospective analysis of adult ambulance offload data from February to June 2022 looking at age, frailty (CFS), inpatient length of stay (LOS), ED re-attendance within 6 months and death. The Older Person's Assessment service (OPAS) is ED based, accepting patients on the basis of the presence of frailty syndromes in patients aged >70 years (falls, confusion, care dependence, polypharmacy and poor mobility) and we take direct referrals from WAST (Welsh Ambulance Service) rather than waiting for ED triage.

Results – A convenience sample of 1000 people transported by ambulance to ED February to June 2022.

≥65 years old– 622 patients (47% Male). Mean 406.3 minutes' offload, CFS 5.4, LOS 11.75 days, Age 80.21 (IQR 73-87), 193 re-presented (32.76%), 135 deaths (22.9%).

<65 years old- 378 patients (52.9% Male). Mean 189 minutes' offload, LOS 5.1 days, Age 43.81 (IQR 33-56), 116 re-presented (31.86%), 24 deaths (6.34%).

Significant associations (P<0.05) for CFS vs LOS, CFS vs Av.offload, Av.offload vs Age and LOS vs Av.Offload, Death vs CFS but not re-presentation vs CFS (p>0.05).



Groups	Mean LOS	Mean Age	Mean Offload Time	Re-presented	Deaths
≥65	11.7	80.21 (IQR 73:87)	406.3	193	135
<65	5.1	43.81 (IQR 33:56)	189	116	24

Conclusion - Longer ambulance offload times are associated with greater 6-month mortality and re-attendance for older, frailer people in ED.

Those directly offloaded to OPAS had decreased LOS (5.1 days) and offload time (121 minutes') despite a mean CFS 6.41, indicating a need to increase OPAS capacity including direct offloads and referrals into OPAS. As each call-out has a cost per hour of £101.34, with average offload for those ≥65 years old being 406 minutes, there are significant potential cost savings.

