

Configuration of Emergency departments in Greece - Difficulties due to the absence of primary health care units

Panagiotis Zogopoulos, Ioanna Galatianou, Georgios Tsanis, Panagiotis Kokkalis, Ioannis Ydraios, Aggelos Leventis

Department of Neurosurgery, General Hospital of Nikaia-Piraeus “Agios Panteleimon”, Athens, Greece

Contrary to other countries, in Greece there is no separation of the emergency departments of public hospitals between primary and more advanced (2nd and 3rd degree) health care units. Therefore, the emergency departments of all public hospitals are treating all presenting patients regardless of their disease or severity of their condition.



The lack of primary health care units, where the less severe cases would be treated, results in an enormous amount of patients presenting at the emergency departments of tertiary hospitals. Specifically, in some large hospitals of Athens nearly 1500 patients are admitted to the emergency departments everyday.



The fact that many not so severe cases are admitted to the same hospitals with multiply and severely injured patients leads to the exhaustion of the staff (doctors and nurses) and to the reduction of the available time for clinical examination of each patient. Furthermore, it also maximizes healthcare costs (medicines, disposable healthcare products etc) in a period that Greece is already facing a serious economic crisis.



In conclusion, there is an unmet need for the creation of fully operational primary health care units that will help decongest the emergency departments of large hospitals and thus optimize health services.