Emergency Department Visits in 2014–2015

In 2014–2015, more than 10 million emergency department (ED) visits were reported to NACRS, representing approximately 63% of all ED visits in Canada. All facilities in Alberta and Ontario, and participating facilities in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Yukon, are included.

9 out of 10 ED visits were completed in 7.6 hours or less.*

* After age adjustment.

Patients 65+ were more likely to spend more time in the ED and to be admitted.

Top 3 reasons for visit:
- Acute upper respiratory infection
- Ear infection
- Fever

- Abdominal/pelvic pain
- Acute upper respiratory infection
- Throat infection

- Abdominal/pelvic pain
- Pain in throat/chest
- Dorsalgia (back pain)

- Pain in throat/chest
- Urinary system disorders
- Abdominal/pelvic pain

Overall, 9 out of 10 patients spent 7.6 hours or less in the ED

Source
National Ambulatory Care Reporting System, Canadian Institute for Health Information.
Frequent ED users accounted for over 30% of all ED visits.

Nearly 1 in 10 patients were frequent ED users, meaning they visited the ED 4 or more times over the year. These patients accounted for over 30% of all ED visits.

The percentage of ED visits made by frequent users increased with age of patients. For patients under 18 years of age, the 7% who were frequent users accounted for 22% of visits in that age group, while for patients 85 and over, the 15% who were frequent users accounted for 39% of visits.

More information

For more information, please access additional data via CIHI’s Quick Stats.

Feedback and questions are welcome at cad@cihi.ca.

The leading conditions† for which patients were admitted from EDs were COPD,‡ heart failure and pneumonia. The time spent until decision to admit§ for these conditions ranged from 11.2 to 11.7 hours** and the additional time waiting for an inpatient bed ranged from 27.5 to 30.2 hours.***

† Based on the most responsible diagnosis in the Discharge Abstract Database (DAD) and data submitted by facilities to NACRS in 2014–2015.
‡ COPD: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
§ Time until decision to admit includes registration, triage, assessment and treatment in the ED.
** Hours represent maximum time spent by 9 out of 10 patients in the ED.
*** Percentage of all admitted patients by hospital type.

Source
National Ambulatory Care Reporting System, Canadian Institute for Health Information.