A framework for health promoting emergency departments

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Since 1986, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been motivating health sectors to promote clinical and curative services (WHO, 1986). Some Emergency Departments (EDs) have partially achieved this through providing patient health information, screening and early intervention programs, injury prevention, and asthma education. A significant organizational shift is required for EDs to promote health principles. Following a comprehensive literature review, a theoretical framework was developed for the Health Promoting Emergency Departments Program (HPEDP). It describes opportunities for health promotion in EDs through combining the ‘strategies for health promotion’ with the ‘spectrum of health and disease’. This forms a matrix to enable health development, primary prevention, and secondary prevention interventions to be planned in EDs. The framework is a tool to support the development of coordinated and comprehensive health promotion programs and to avoid the use of isolated victim-blaming strategies. Beyond EDs, planners in other health care institutions may also find the framework useful, particularly in those settings where health promotion training staffs’ experience is limited.

Method: More than 32 research papers were identified through a comprehensive literature review. A total of 85% were obtained from peer-reviewed journals and other documents. Numerous databases were utilized, including Medline Express, Health and Society, CINCH-Health, PubMed, and Ebscohost full text.

Results: This search identified opportunities for health promotion in EDs. Search terms included: ‘emergency department’ or ‘trauma centre’; ‘emergency medicine’ ‘health promotion’; or ‘prevention’ ‘a range of risk factors’.

Keywords: emergency department, framework, health promoting hospitals, health promotion