

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Emergency General Surgical Admission in King Faisal Hospital Makkah, KSA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction and Background: The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has greatly impacted healthcare service and disruption in functioning of hospitals worldwide. The applied restrictive preventive measures affected patients' decision to visit emergency departments (ED) hospitals seeking surgical consultation and other medical care. However, there are numbers of problems that contribute to the noticeable decrease of ED visits in the pandemic period. With the upsurge of confirmed cases of covid-19 patients, people are getting anxious of ED visits in fear of hospital acquired infection. The kingdom of Saudi Arabia, one of the best countries successfully applied the highly restrictive health measures to prevent and spread of with COVID-19 was on March 2nd, 2020.

Aim: This study aims to assess and compare the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on emergency department admissions volume of emergency surgical patients in King Faisal General Hospital, Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

Methods: A retrospective cohort study was conducted including All patients who visited King Faisal Hospital ED, and required general surgery consultation from 2019 and 2021, six months before and similar period during the pandemic covid-19. Data were collected from medical records of patient who visited ED and required surgical consultation, in pre and during pandemic period. Data were analyzed and compared to a corresponding non-pandemic period covering the same time interval in 2019 and 2021. A pre-structured data collection sheet for each period that consists of four primary sections was used to avoid data extraction errors.

Results: A total of 872 patients were included in this study, during 2019, 256 (29.4%) during 2020, and 616 (70.7%) during 2021. Exact of 67% of those who attended at 2019-2021 were regular patients versus to 70.7% of others who attended at 2020. As for level of triage, it was CAT 2 among 48.1% of cases admitted during 2019-2021 versus 46.9% of cases admitted during 2020. Considering length of hospital stay, 33.6% of cases admitted during 2019-2021 were for 1 day versus 27.3% of those admitted during 2020 while admission for 2-4 days was reported among 42.2% and 36.7%, respectively (P=.004).

Conclusion: In conclusion, the current study showed that there was a significant drop at the number of patients attended to ED and reduced the length of hospital stay during the peak of covid-19 pandemic. The indirect impact of Covid-19 on the healthcare system can help improve treatment strategies in future outbreaks.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, emergency visits, admission, Makkah.

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