Improving Triage Times and Patient/Staff Satisfaction using a Temporal Artery Thermometer in the ED setting.
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BACKGROUND
- Rectal thermometers are invasive to pediatrics and decrease triage times.
- Standard way of obtaining temperatures on patients under the age of three was via rectal thermometers.
- Needed to find a method that would ensure nurse, patient, and parent satisfaction for all of our patients.
- To test effectiveness of temporal artery thermometer (TAT) we first had to educate staff and present evidence to medical director and ER physicians to promote physician acceptance.

PURPOSE
- To determine if using a temporal artery thermometer on all ED patients in triage would decrease the overall triage time and improve patient and staff satisfaction using a less invasive method.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- Design: retrospective pilot study
  - evidence based practice model guided the shared governance committee in the ED to implement this study
- Setting: rural hospital, which is part of a not for profit healthcare system, located in the southeastern United States
  - study was conducted in a 23 Emergency Department (ED) that averages 37,000 patients a year.
- Participants/Subjects:
  - all patient populations being cared for in the ED were included in this study
  - sample size 102 patients
- Methods:
  - Every patient that presented to the ED, excluding EMS patients, was part of this study during the pilot time frame.
  - A random sample of triage times was compared to pilot triage times to determine if times were improved using the TAT.
  - The triage nurse completed a TAT evaluation form, using a Likert scale, to determine ease of use, patients/staff preference, and staff perception related to triage times.

RESULTS

Outcome:
- results were significant
- retrospective average times were 308 seconds
- during the pilot study, triage times were 240 seconds using the TAT
- The data showed a decrease in triage times by 75 seconds per patient.
- Staff preferred the TAT 100% of the time while the patient preference was 92% of the time.
- Staff also felt that triage time was decreased by using the TAT.

CONCLUSIONS

- This study has shown that using the Temporal Artery Thermometer in triage on emergency department patients has:
  - decreased triage times
  - ED nurses reported increased satisfaction using the TAT versus traditional thermometers.
  - Patients rated their experience with the TAT favorably and preferred this method.
- The impact to leadership in conducting this study has shown the need to continue use of the TAT in triage to decrease triage times and improve patient/staff satisfaction.

REFERENCES