

## **Ambulance diversion associated with reduced access to cardiac technology and increased one-year mortality.**

June 21, 2016

Shen Y-C, Hsia RY. Ambulance diversion associated with reduced access to cardiac technology and increased one-year mortality. Health Aff (Millwood). 2015;34(8):1273-80. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2014.1462. <https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/ambulance-diversion-associated-reduced-access-cardiac-technology-and-increased-one-year>

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Overcrowding in emergency departments is a recognized [safety hazard](#) for patients. This study of heart attack patients in California demonstrates that overcrowding can have population-level effects when it is severe enough to force hospitals to close themselves to incoming ambulances ("diversion"). Patients whose closest emergency department experienced significant ambulance diversion had decreased access to life-saving therapies and had an increased one-year mortality risk. These results highlight the importance of [patient flow](#) throughout the hospital in order to ensure emergency department capacity. A past AHRQ WebM&M [commentary](#) discussed overcrowding in emergency rooms and triage processes to manage patient volume.