**GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON OVERCROWDING: MALAYSIA'S STRATEGIES IN FOCUS**

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**Introduction**: Overcrowding in emergency department (ED) can lead to multiple negative effects such as long waiting time, patients leaving without treatment, medical errors, and poor patient outcomes. Despite the efforts made to reduce waiting times, the overcrowding problem has remained unresolved. A wide range of strategies have been suggested by various parties to overcome ED overcrowding globally. Little is known of the implementation of these strategies in Malaysia since there is lack of comprehensive report on strategies used in Ministry of Health (MOH) hospitals.

**Objectives:** The aim of this study is to describe the strategies used to tackle overcrowding at ED globally compared to MOH hospitals.

**Methodology:** This is a cross-sectional study design, divided into two sections. The first section is a scoping review of global strategies implemented in ED to address overcrowding. The second section involves a self-administered checklist completed by all 138 public hospitals under the MOH (excluding special institutions), documenting the strategies their EDs use to manage overcrowding. The data was collected from October 2023 to February 2024. Descriptive and thematic analyses were conducted to interpret the findings. The strategies were further mapped according to the ED crowding model by Asplin et al (2003) comprises of three components: input, throughput, and output.

**Result:** Findings from the scoping review indicate that the majority of strategies fall under the throughput component (61.7%), followed by output (22.8%) and input (15.5%). Contrarily, output strategies are more prominent in MOH, accounting for 46.4%, followed by throughput (37.3%) and input (16.3%).

**Conclusion:** Most of the strategies implemented globally focus on the throughput component within the ED, while in MOH, most of the hospitals emphasise on improving the output component. This may be influenced by MOH's focus on reducing bed waiting time which falls under the output component; hence, much more effort was made in this specific component as compared to others. As a recommendation, it is suggested that the MOH addresses all three components in determining strategies for the EDs, thereby ensuring a smoother patient flow, and improving overall service delivery.

**Keywords:** emergency department, overcrowding, strategies

(343 words)