

# Study highlights importance of emergency department in hospital readmissions

May 19 2020, by Jessica Haasz

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Emergency departments may play a surprising role in the reduction of readmission rates following the implementation of Medicare's Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program, according to a recent analysis.

Charleen Hsuan, assistant professor of health policy and administration at Penn State, led a study that examined what happens to discharged patients when they returned to a hospital's emergency department. The results were recently published in *JAMA Network Open*.

For their research, the authors used a retrospective analysis examining hospital data from three states: California, Florida and New York.

The researchers found the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program (HRRP) was associated with a reduction in the probability of [readmission](#) for recently discharged patients presenting to the emergency department, even for conditions for which admission is usually indicated, including [congestive heart failure](#).

The analysis also showed that almost all patients with unplanned readmissions come through the emergency department.

Especially during times such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to reduce the number of unnecessary patients in the hospital. "Medicare's HRRP aims to do this by reducing unnecessary readmissions for [patients](#) hospitalized with key conditions," said Hsuan. "Our study found that the [emergency department](#) is an important gatekeeper for readmission decisions."

**More information:** Charleen Hsuan et al. Assessment of Hospital Readmissions From the Emergency Department After Implementation of Medicare's Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program, *JAMA Network Open* (2020). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.3857](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.3857)

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

Citation: Study highlights importance of emergency department in hospital readmissions (2020, May 19) retrieved 2 April 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-05-highlights-importance-emergency-department-hospital.html>

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