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Emergency Departments Should Offer Immigrants Translation

2 The study, carried out in the Department of Medicine at the University of Granada, consisted of an analysis of **health services** provided to immigrants in accident and emergency departments in Spanish hospitals.

The researchers concluded that, in addition to other measures, there is a need to create an immigrant treatment working party, establish a direct telephone link with a 24h translation service or provide sociocultural mediator services.

This research, which was conducted by Francisco Manuel Parrilla Ruiz, from the Department of Medicine at the University of Granada, and directed by lecturer Francisco Javier Gómez Jiménez and Antonio Cárdenas Cruz (a specialist in Intensive Care Medicine), was carried out at Almería's Hospital de Poniente

Accident and Emergency Department. This is a region where many immigrants live and work in the agricultural sector, and is therefore characterised by its special sociodemographic features. Hence, the profile of an immigrant attending this centre is that of a 26-year-old North African born male, with a low level of education. He is usually accompanied by a fellow countryman who acts as an interpreter. Almost all these immigrants work in the agricultural sector and go to the health centre because of common colds, bone and muscular pain or non-surgical abdominal pain. Parrilla Ruiz underlines that during the period of the study – one year – 28% of patients treated were immigrants, although this figure can be extrapolated to other regions of Spain.

Minor problems

The researcher stresses that most consultations for foreigners at Accident and Emergency Departments are due to minor health problems (priority 3 or non-hospital cases) and their admission rate is much lower than admission rates for the native population. His work shows details, such as the most frequent consultation reason during Ramadan, which is epigastralgia (a disorder related to excessive consumption of food after prolonged fasting), or the drop of more than 70% in the number of immigrants treated during the religious festival of Eid ul Adha (Sacrifice Day).

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