

Develop an triage instrument for cancer patients in emergency care

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BACKGROUND: Triage in the emergency room is used to classify patients as to their need for care and seriousness, and the nurse is the professional appointed to carry out this process using a prepared instrument. It's known that there are several internationally validated instruments, however, no instrument for evaluation of cancer patients. In daily practice, it was felt the need for an instrument which could be assessed specific signs and symptoms in patients during and after treatment.

HYPOTHESIS: Develop an instrument for evaluation of the patient during triage in emergency cancer care.

METHODS: This is an experience report prepared according to the contributions made by nurses at a private institution in São Paulo.

RESULTS: The basic structure of the instrument checks vital signs, main complaint and classifies patients into three levels (emergency, urgent and non-urgent), based on the algorithm used by the Emergency Severity Index (ESI), instrument internationally validated for patient classification. Based on the practice and experience of nurses serving in the emergency room, it was decided to include some common toxicity criteria during treatment. Adding a field to describe the type of cancer and current treatment was also performed.