

## Background

Quality improvement initiatives should not only focus on increasing survival rates, but also on optimising quality of life [1]. Little is known on the needs of major trauma patients, once discharged from hospital [2].

## Aim(s)

Early identification of trauma patients' physical, psychological, and social needs, arising post-discharge. Promoting initiation of targeted interventions/support.

## Methods

The project was coordinated by a nurse specialist, in close collaboration with social workers. It consisted of five consecutive phases: 1) first estimation of patient's needs, during hospital stay and at one week post-discharge; 2) identification of needs at 3 weeks, 3 months and 12 months after the accident, using validated questionnaires (PROMIS® 29+2, EQ-5D-5L); 3) clarification of needs post-discharge, by telephone; 4) targeted interventions/support; 5) multidisciplinary team meetings with partners from hospital and first line.

## Results

A total of 70 major trauma patients participated in the project. In 10 (14.3%) patients, unmet needs were identified at 1 week post-discharge. Preliminary results indicated that additional interventions were needed in 11/69 (15.9%) patients at three weeks follow-up, and in 7/61 (11.5%) patients at 3 months. Limitations in the physical, social and psychological functioning were identified at all points of follow-up. Patients appreciated the practical and psychological/emotional support, as well as the availability of support if needed.

## Discussion

An important part of major trauma patients may benefit from additional support post-discharge, to optimise quality of life. A collaboration between a nurse specialist and social workers was effective in supporting or referring most patients. In complex cases, a multidisciplinary team meeting, involving intramural and extramural partners, was of great value. A strength of our project was, that all non-respondents got a telephone call to explore possible needs for support.

## Implications and future perspectives

Long-term follow-up of major trauma patients is essential, but requires sufficient personnel and resources. A strong need exists for specific initiatives to recognise these patients and to promote their functioning, quality of life and social participation.

A long-term, large scale study is recommended to draw strong conclusions on the extent of unmet needs in major trauma patients and possible influencing factors. Future studies should also focus on (cost-)effective strategies to timely identify and support major trauma patients and their families.

## References

1. David et al., 53:272-285, 2022.
2. Hatchimonji et al, 52:127-133, 2021.