

## Development and implementation of a structured emergency nursing triage training program

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### INTRODUCTION & AIM

In most Emergency Departments (EDs) worldwide, triage is traditionally performed by specially trained and experienced nurses, forming the cornerstone of safe and efficient patient flow management. In Greece, organized Triage in EDs began being implemented in 2018 by ED attendings. Nurses' privileges for ED Triage were legislated only in 2022. Having a long ground to cover, a systematic training program in triage for nurses was implemented at Nikaia's Hospital in Greece.

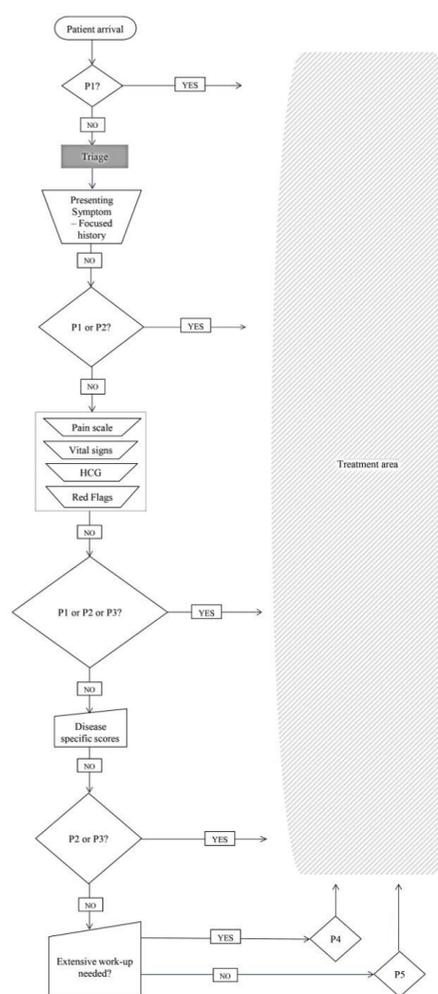
The aim of this paper is to analyze the development and the practical application of a structured emergency nursing triage training program contributing to improved patient safety, enhanced nurse competency, and increased emergency department (ED) efficiency.

### METHOD/IMPLEMENTATION

Nikaia Hospital's ED implemented structural physician triage since 2016. Having this background and, based on specific requirements, regional regulations, and globally recognized best practices, a standardized nurse triage procedure was developed. The main objective was to create a training program that would enable the triage nurses to classify patients' acuity accurately and safely. The training program was designed with a six-month theoretical component and a one-month on-the-job training component. After completing the training, nurses managed triage under the supervision of ED attendings before continuing on their own. In order to analyze specific triage cases and provide educational interventions to address prevalent areas of under-or over-triage, monthly meetings with triage nurses and ED attendings were held.

The training program's evaluation was in line with findings from the global literature that highlight the decrease in conflicts between triage and treatment area attendings. Nikaia's Hospital ED is one of the first hospitals in Greece to introduce a systematic triage training program. At the same time a multi-layer triage approach based on the Swiss cheese model was developed. Training, reviewing, and quality control have become simpler with the creation of an objective

### Multi-layer Triage System



and repeatable system. The flowchart and various scales utilized serve as the framework for continuing training triage nurses.

### RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The effectiveness and depth of experience acquired by the staff of Nikaia's Hospital have been recognized nationally. The Hellenic Society for Emergency Medicine (HESEM) has based its National Triage System proposal on this model. Additionally, the first academic program of specialized training in triage of the Medical School of the

University of Patras is developed and delivered, among others, by Nikaia's triage staff.

### CONCLUSION

The structured triage training program implemented at the General Hospital of Nikaia strengthened nurses' clinical decision-making, improved patient prioritization, and enhanced collaboration within the Emergency Department.

The positive outcomes and national recognition highlight the importance of standardized triage education and support its wider implementation across Greek EDs to promote patient safety and quality of care.

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