

ABSTRACT

Duration of patient immobilization in the ED.

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In this article we seek to determine the duration of immobilization in patients presented to the emergency department (ED). We conducted a 10-week prospective study of a convenience sample of patients transported to a level-one trauma center immobilized with a backboard and cervical collar. Total backboard time (TBT) was measured from the time the ambulance left the scene to the time the patient was removed from the backboard, while total ED backboard time (TEDBT) was measured from the time of arrival at the ED to the time of backboard removal. There were 138 patients entered in the study. Insufficient data excluded 36 patients from further analysis. TBT was available for 92 patients and averaged 63.63 (+/-45.87) minutes. Dividing patients into those who were removed from the backboard prior to radiographs (n=85), the TBT average was 53.9 minutes (+/-30.1), whereas the average for those who had radiographs prior to removal from the backboard (n=7) was 181.3 minutes (+/- 41.6). There were 102 patients for whom TEDBT was available and averaged 46.36 (+/- 44.88) minutes. Dividing patients into those who were removed from the backboard prior to radiographs (n=95), the TEDBT average was 37.6 minutes (+/-29.6), whereas the average for those who had radiographs prior to removal from the backboard (n = 7) was 165.3 minutes (+/- 49.7). Patients are left on backboards for significant periods of time even when no radiographs are taken prior to backboard removal.

Am J Emerg Med 2000 Jan;18(1):28-30