Reasons for Surgical Referral in Rural Ethiopian Hospitals

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Background

- **Surgical referrals**: a referral for surgical services made from one hospital to a higher level hospital

**Purpose**: Determine the most common reasons for surgical referral.
Methods

• Descriptive cross-sectional study
• Location: 5 primary-level hospitals in Amhara, Ethiopia
• Included all reasons for emergency & elective referrals in May 2018 (total of 31 days)
## Findings

### Number of Referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Referral</th>
<th>Hospital 1</th>
<th>Hospital 2</th>
<th>Hospital 3</th>
<th>Hospital 4</th>
<th>Hospital 5</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Need for specialist care</strong></td>
<td>68 (97.1%)</td>
<td>61 (93.9%)</td>
<td>59 (84%)</td>
<td>90 (95%)</td>
<td>16 (59%)</td>
<td>294 (89.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of diagnostic equipment</strong></td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>1 (1.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8 (29.6%)</td>
<td>10 (3.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of drugs</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>5 (5.3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patient preference</strong></td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>1 (1.5%)</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (7.4%)</td>
<td>6 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of medical supplies/consumables</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (5.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

• Reveals the substantial need for specialized surgical care and more resources in primary-level hospitals

• May help identify future areas of intervention for Safe Surgery 2020 & the Federal Ministry of Health
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