Authors’ Reply

Dear Sir/Editor,

In reply to your Letter to Editor regarding ‘Physician attendance during interhospital patient transfer in Ontario: 2005–2015’, I would like to clarify that, even within Ontario, physician-attended transfer of patients is the exception, rather than the rule. Most transfers can be managed by Emergency Medical Service (EMS) personnel, the provincial air ambulance service and/or a combination of nursing and respiratory therapist personnel, with telephonic support from a physician. The decision to transfer with a physician in attendance is highly dependent on the personnel and resources of the hospital and medical system in question, the anticipated needs of the patient being transferred and the weather and geographic details of the transfer itself. The letter from Dr Joob clearly illustrates the role that local factors play in transfer decisions. Dr Joob suggests training of personnel specifically for transfer purposes. This occurred within Ontario during our study period, 2005–2015, as the provincial air ambulance service ORNGE expanded significantly. We speculate that this may be why physician-attended air ambulance transfers from remote origins fell during our study period, and this likely represents a boon to the patients and hospitals in these remote regions.

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