Consequences

- Timely access
- Quality of care
- Patient safety
- Patent flow
- System stress
Emergency ambulance demand
4.8% average annual increase, 1995-2008

Rate/1000 population by age group

Numbers transported by age group

Lowthian JA et al. The challenges of population ageing: accelerating demand for emergency ambulance services by older patients, 1995-2015. MJA 2011;194:574-8
Emergency Department demand

3.6% average annual increase, 2000-2009

Rate/1000 population by age group

Lowthian JA et al. Demand at the ED front door: 10-yr trends in presentations. MJA 2012;196:128-32
Admissions through ED

- 3.9% average annual increase, 2000-2009
- ≥2 days
  - ↓ 8.5% in volume
- same day/overnight
  - ↑ 60% in volume
  - av. annual rise 6.1%

EMA 2012: 24; 219-221
Older ED patient presentations aged ≥70 years

2000 /09 72% ↑ in attendances over 10 years
(X3 rate of growth in the population)

2009 17% of all ED presentations
- Emergency ambulance arrival 55%
- RACF residents 12%
- ATS 3 41%
- ATS 4 & 5 41%
- ED LOS ≥4 hours 69%
- Discharged directly home 36%

Increasing propensity for patients to re-attend ED
- 28% patients attend X2-X3 per year 38% of all visits
- 7% patients attend X≥4 per year 23% of all visits

### 100 older Alfred ED patient’s perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary reason for choosing ED</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Referral by a third party</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td><em>I had just come out of hospital...I fainted at lunch with my girlfriends...someone called the ambulance...</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility to primary care</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td><em>the ED is quicker than getting an appointment with the GP</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Patient / family preferences for care**                   | 24 | *... will need an x-ray, so we came here as it is all under one roof... so much easier*
|                                                            |    | *This is where you go. You don’t go anywhere else; the GP diagnoses the wrong stuff’* |
| **Fast track access to specialist care**                    | 33 | *I wasn’t getting anywhere with my O/P appointment.. GP said let’s try going to the ED and see if that speeds it up & it did!* |
In conclusion

- Persisting rise in demand beyond what can be accounted for by population change
- Disproportionately driven by older age groups
  - ↑ Co morbidities
  - ↑ Resources – ED & hospital
  - ↑ Rate of return visits
  - ↑ Expectations re: timeliness/convenience
- Do they all need hospital-based care?