

# DEMOGRAPHIC AND CLINICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RED TAG PATIENTS AND THEIR ONE-WEEK MORTALITY RATE FROM THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OF THE HOSPITAL UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

Rashidi Ahmad, Rashdan Rahmat, Nik Hisamudin Nik Abdul Rahman,  
Abu Yazid Mohd Noh, Nasir Mohammad, Sheik Farid Abdul Wahab and Ida Zarina Zaini

Department of Emergency Medicine, School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains  
Malaysia, Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, Malaysia

**Abstract.** Early identification and rapid treatment of red tag patients may decrease morbidity and mortality. We examined the clinical characteristics, etiologies and one week mortality rate of red tag (life threatening and potentially life threatening illness) patients at the Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysai (HUSM). A cross-sectional study was conducted at the Emergency Department of the HUSM from 1 August 2006 to 31 January 2007; 440 eligible patients were analyzed. The group had a mean age of  $47.2 \pm 22$  years, with 67.3% of the patients being male. Twenty-three percent were trauma cases with motor vehicle accident being the major mechanism of injury. Fifty-four percent of the cases had cardiac related illnesses. The mean duration of stay in the Emergency Department (ED) was  $3.9 \pm 1.5$  hours. The survival rate at one week was 76.6%. The non-trauma group comprised 74.0% of death cases. Acute coronary syndrome and road traffic accidents comprised 22.0% of total death cases at one week. Red tag patients constitute a large proportion of ED cases and may remain in the ED for significant periods of time.

---

Correspondence: Dr Rashidi Ahmad, Department of Emergency Medicine, School of Medical Sciences, USM Health Campus, 16150 Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, Malaysia.  
E-mail: shidee\_ahmad@yahoo.com