

Overview of Length of Stay in a Community Palliative Care service.

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Background:

While there are several studies examining of Length of Stay in inpatient Palliative Care Services⁽¹⁻⁹⁾, studies examining a similar metric in outpatient Palliative Care Services are lacking. Describing the characteristics of Length of Stay may contribute to service planning.

Aims & Objectives:

To review all discharges from two community palliative care settings in a one year period to describe the distribution of length of stay within the service. We defined Length of Stay as: (the amount of time spent within the service from the initial assessment to either discharge or death) minus (periods spent discharged to other services). Said another way, Length of Stay is the total time a patient spends *within* the service, as opposed to time they were *discharged* to other services such as their GP (see below for diagram illustrating this concept).

Methods:

Review of our Patient Administration System for dates of entry and discharge from the Service.

Results:

Length of Stay in Setting A - of 33 cases reviewed, 18% were 10 days or less and 39% were 100 days or more. Of all cases with > 1 episode of care, the average Length of Stay was 145 days. Of these cases, 10% were 10 days or less and 40% were 100 days or more. The average percentage time they were *within* the service was 35%.

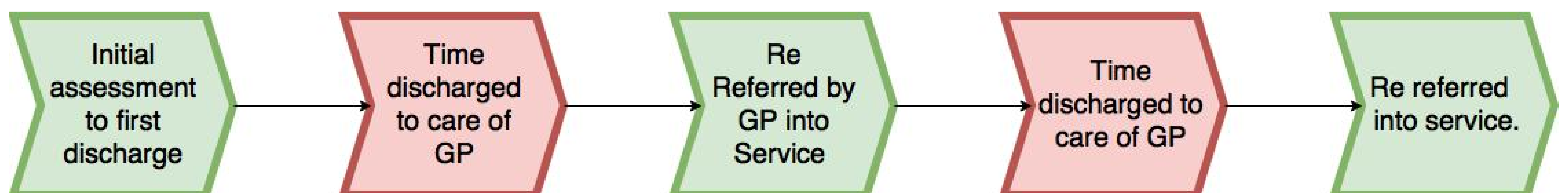
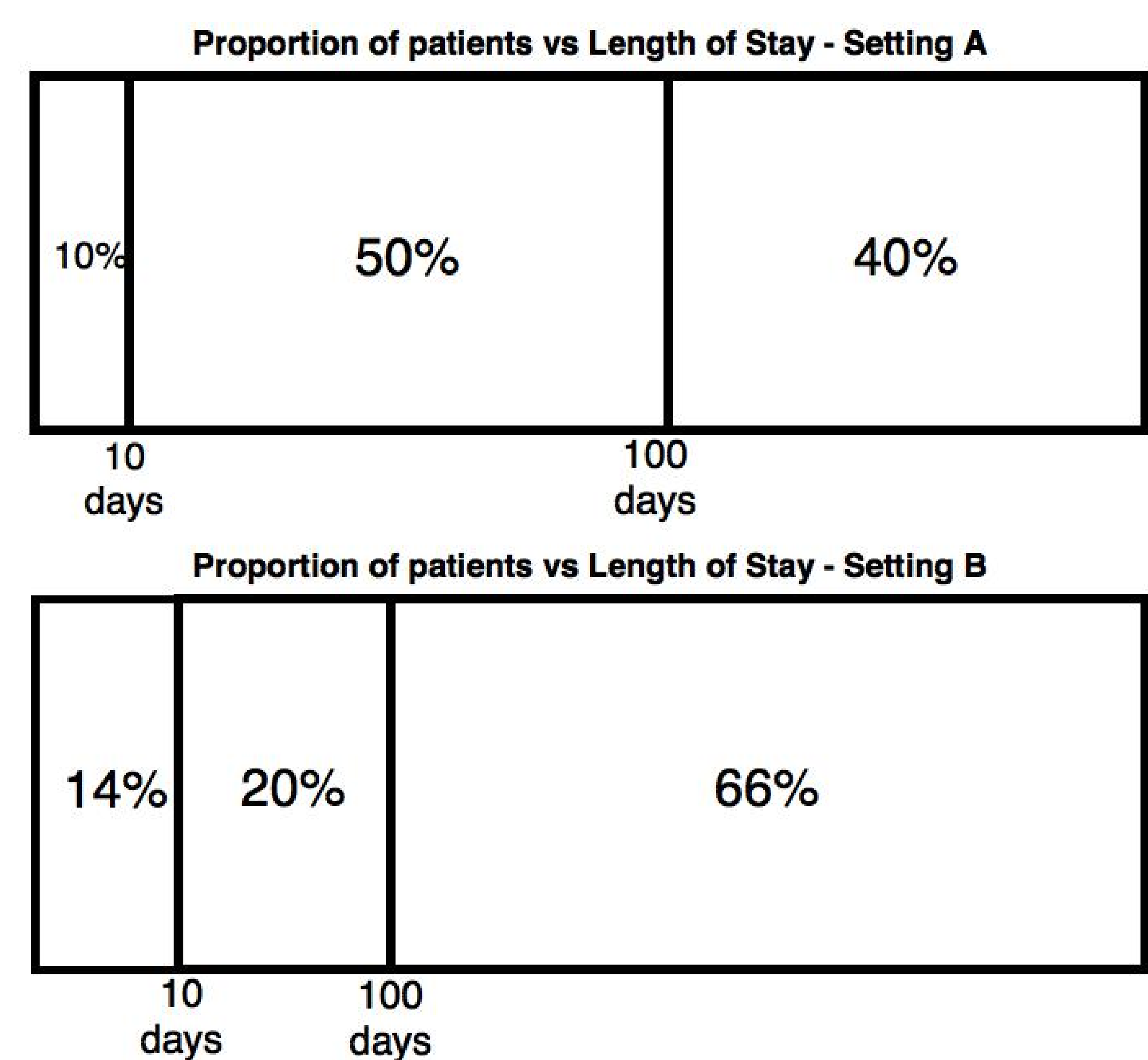
Length of Stay in Setting B - of 83 cases reviewed,

33% were 10 days or less and 23% were 100 days or more. Of all cases with > 1 episode, the average Length of Stay was 129 days. Of these cases, 14% were 10 days or less and 66% were 100 days or more.

The average percentage time they were *within* the service was 37%.

Conclusions:

Characteristics of Length of Stay appeared broadly similar for each team in that in both settings, most patients stayed more than 10 days, with at least 40% of multiple episode patients in each setting staying more than 100 days. On average, approximately a third of their time from initial assessment was spent 'within' the service. Given that this is a substantial proportion, and that a high proportion of patients have a long Length of Stay, it may be that further research into the reasons for this proportion being this high in our services would highlight opportunities for rationalisation of service use and time.



We defined 'Length of Stay' as the total sum of time spent within the episodes in green. For setting A, on average, this was 145 days, being 35% of the total time from initial assessment. For setting B, on average it was 129 days, being 37% of the total time from initial assessment.

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