

REASONS FOR CANCELLATION OF HELICOPTER EMERGENCY
MEDICAL SERVICE (HEMS) TRANSPORT BY REQUESTER
S. Thibeault APRN, EMT-P, J. Childs RN, EMT-P; K. Robinson MD
LIFE STAR – Hartford Hospital, Hartford CT

Purpose and Rational

LIFE STAR (Hartford Hospital, Hartford, CT) is a two helicopter rotor wing air medial transport program that services a 150 mile radius around each of two bases. In 2009, *LIFE STAR* was requested for transport 2328 times, of which 1211 were completed. Of the requests that did not result in transport, 190 (17%) were cancelled by the requesting agency.

Synthesis of Review of Literature

A review of the literature yielded no information on the reasons for cancellation by the requesting agency in HEMS transport.

Research Question

The specific aims of this project are to determine the reason for cancellation of transport that is cited most frequently by respondents and to determine the percentage of each reason cited.

Methods/Procedures

After internal review board (IRB) approval a descriptive survey was performed. Subjects were identified through bi-weekly review of dispatch records. An inclusion criterion was a flight request that was subsequently cancelled by the requesting agency. The survey, instructions, and a letter explaining the intent were mailed to the agency representative that requested patient transport and subsequently cancelled the request. The written survey contained a list of reasons which could influence the decision to cancel transport. The respondents were instructed to select the reason(s) they chose to cancel their request. The duration of the study was nine consecutive months (4/1/09-12/31/09). Confidentiality of the respondents was guaranteed. Consent was implied by the voluntary return of the survey.

Results

A total of 154 requests for transport were subsequently cancelled by the requester. A total of 98 surveys were returned, of which 3 were excluded due to incomplete response or multiple reasons listed without ranking of importance. A total of 95 surveys were utilized in the data analysis.

The primary reason for cancellation was utilized in the data analysis. At 25.26%, the most frequently cited reason for cancellation was "Expected arrival time of aircraft too long to wait." The second most frequent reason was "Patient expired" (21.05%). The third most listed response was "Patient with less acuity of injury/illness than originally anticipated" (15.79%).

Discussion/Application to Practice

HEMS transport exists to provide the advantage of rapid transport to an appropriate facility. Ground transport is utilized if the requestor feels that the wait time for aircraft is too long. These findings support placement of air medical transport helicopters in close proximity to areas of utilization in order to reduce the time of aircraft arrival to the patient.