# **Abstract**

**INTRODUCTION** – In Belgium, the Med-Surg Units and the ICU have adopted standards for dealing with the workload. This is not the case for Emergency Departments (EDs), though, despite a 23% increase in the number of contacts between 2010 and 2019. To determine caregivers’ needs in the EDs, it is necessary to determine beforehand their workload. The present study aims to find a simple method to correctly measure the nursing workload in the EDs.

**METHODS** – A cross-sectional study was performed in four Belgian EDs. The exact nursing workload was measured, using the WANE scale, in each hospital during 4-hour time periods, through different shifts. Correlations were made between workload and variables such as: subjective workload assessment, number of contacts in the ED, triage level and Jones Dependency Tool Score.

**RESULTS** – Results show that the total of patients explains, highly significantly, 78% of the variation in the Total Nursing Care Time (TNCT). Number of new patients and nurses’ subjective workload evaluation are also highly correlated with this TNCT. As far as the direct care time is concerned, 67% of its variation can be highly significantly explained with a model made up of triage level and two items of the Jones Dependency Tool (ABC perturbation and mobility).

**CONCLUSIONS** – Simples indicators can be used to evaluate the nursing care time in Belgian EDs. To do so, a retrospective method is proposed, using the total number of patients over a defined period of time. This study reveals a path to a predictive method to calculate the direct care time for each patient with three simple indicators, available from nursing triage.

# **Keywords**

Workload ; Nurses ; Emergency Departments ; Direct care ; Indirect care