



## City Research Online

### City, University of London Institutional Repository

---

**Citation:** Skene, I., Pott, J. & McKeown, E. (2017). Patients' experience of trauma care in the emergency department of a major trauma centre in the UK. *International Emergency Nursing*, 35, pp. 1-6. doi: 10.1016/j.ienj.2017.02.005

This is the accepted version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version.

---

**Permanent repository link:** <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/17642/>

**Link to published version:** <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ienj.2017.02.005>

**Copyright:** City Research Online aims to make research outputs of City, University of London available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the author(s) and/or copyright holders. URLs from City Research Online may be freely distributed and linked to.

**Reuse:** Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

---

---

---

City Research Online:

<http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/>

[publications@city.ac.uk](mailto:publications@city.ac.uk)

---

1 International Emergency Nursing

2

3 **Patients' experience of trauma care in the emergency**  
4 **department of a major trauma centre in the UK**

5

6 Skene I, Pott J, McKeown E

7

8

### INTRODUCTION

9 Trauma is the fourth leading cause of death in western countries and the  
10 leading cause of death in people under 40 years old (National Confidential  
11 Enquiry into Patient Outcomes and Death (NCEPOD) 2007). There has been  
12 focus on developing trauma care in the last few years with the National Health  
13 Service (NHS) Outcomes Framework (Department of Health (DoH) 2013)  
14 Domain 3 being focused on survival for major trauma. Major trauma describes  
15 serious and often multiple injuries where there is a strong possibility of death  
16 or disability (National Audit Office 2010).

17

18 Trauma affects people from all age groups, geographic areas and  
19 socioeconomic classes. Trauma patients require specialist care from a  
20 multidisciplinary group of professionals. The initial assessment of major  
21 trauma patients' is challenging with minutes making the difference between  
22 life and death. Trauma can impact physically, emotionally and financially on  
23 the patient as well as their family and friends, both by the immediacy of the  
24 traumatic event and the long-term effects.

25

26 The trauma team consists of clinicians who carry out pre-assigned roles  
27 simultaneously so that interventions occur rapidly (Cole and Crichton 2006).  
28 Good trauma care involves getting the patient to the right place at the right  
29 time for the right care (NHS.UK 2014), and major trauma centres (MTC) are  
30 set up to provide this specialised care. This involves rapidly identifying  
31 injuries, completing investigations and accessing specialist care as soon as  
32 possible after arriving at hospital.

33

34 Despite on-going improvements in trauma care and trauma systems, there is  
35 little literature looking at the patients' experience of trauma care in the  
36 emergency department (ED). In a review of the literature, seven studies were  
37 identified which examined the trauma care from the patient perspective, one  
38 of which was UK based. When O'Brien and Fothergill-Bourbonnais (2004)  
39 interviewed seven trauma patients about their perspectives on trauma  
40 resuscitation in the Emergency Department (ED), they found patient's initial  
41 perceptions of vulnerability subsided as a sense of feeling safe became  
42 prominent and that caring behaviours, such as touch and tone of voice  
43 contributed to a positive experience. The combination of efficiency and caring  
44 by the trauma team helped to create an environment where patients' felt safe.  
45 An earlier study by Jay (1996) explored and described issues in relation to  
46 nursing care that are important to trauma patients in the ED in England. In  
47 their findings based on seven interviews with trauma patients, they concluded  
48 that touch, company and information were important in coping and regaining  
49 control, as well as the need to trust the healthcare professionals.

50

51 Patients in an MTC are likely to be severely injured and Franzen et al (2008)  
52 found that severely injured patients tended to rate the quality of care more  
53 highly. Franzen et al (2008) and Wiman et al (2006) found that the less  
54 severely injured patients felt that communication was lacking affecting their  
55 perception of quality of care. Wiman et al (2006) focused on the trauma  
56 patients' conceptions of encounters with the trauma team. Their findings  
57 focused on communication between the patient and the healthcare  
58 professionals and found that participants were more confident, satisfied and  
59 gained comfort from professionals who treated them with both good physical  
60 care as well as providing psycho-social care.

61

62 Increasing knowledge about the patient experience of care in the ED is  
63 important to understand their situation and their needs following a traumatic  
64 event.

65

66

67

## METHODS

68 A qualitative research design was used and data collected by semi-structured  
69 interviews. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed  
70 thematically.

71 The study aim was to describe the patient perspective of trauma care in the  
72 ED. The study objectives were to: describe the ED environment from the  
73 perspective of the trauma patient; explore the trauma patient's experience of  
74 engagement with healthcare professionals in the ED; illuminate the trauma  
75 patient's emotional trajectory and their reflections on care in the ED.

76

### 77 Study context and participants

78 The participants for this study were recruited using a pragmatic convenience  
79 sample from adult patients admitted to the trauma ward of an MTC in London,  
80 having suffered a traumatic injury. The use of convenience sampling for the  
81 patient group allowed for recruitment of a diverse group of participants as  
82 described in Table 2.

83

84 The key ethical issues addressed in relation to the conduct of this study were  
85 related to ensuring informed consent and confidentiality as well as reducing  
86 the risk of coercion and any potential distress that might result from  
87 discussing a sensitive topic. A member of the clinical care team identified  
88 potential participants from trauma admissions. They used the inclusion and  
89 exclusion criteria (table 1) when screening patients, and if the patient fitted the  
90 criteria, they invited the patient to participate in the study. During the data  
91 collection period (April – June 2015), 263 patients were screened and 37  
92 patients were identified as potential participants from the trauma unit. A  
93 patient information sheet was given to them and if they agreed, their details  
94 were passed to the researcher. Those that agreed to see the researcher were  
95 approached; after the patient had a minimum of 24 hours to consider the  
96 study. The researcher was a fulltime student during the study and was not  
97 involved in providing trauma care in the ED. 13 patients in total consented to  
98 participate in the study. Participating patients were assigned pseudonyms.  
99 Coercion was minimal as a member of the clinical care team initially  
100 approached the patients, allowing patients to fully consider if they wanted to  
101 participate prior to being approached by the researcher. All patients identified

102 were approached to minimise any bias in recruiting patients. The impact of  
103 discussing a sensitive topic was considered in the formulation of the topic  
104 guide and in the ethics committee meeting. Participants were reassured they  
105 could stop at anytime and could be signposted to the appropriate people.

106

107

108 Trauma is classified using an injury severity score (ISS), an anatomical  
109 scoring system that provides an overall score for patients with multiple  
110 injuries, ranging from 0-75 with a score of 16 or greater signifying major  
111 trauma (National Audit Office 2010). The ISS for the participants ranged from  
112 4 to 21 (mean= 12.46, SD= 5.91).

113

#### 114 Interviews and data collection

115 Participants were asked to narrate their experience from the initial injury up  
116 until transfer from the ED to the ward. Open questions were used to  
117 encourage patients to describe their engagement with the healthcare  
118 professionals; the environment in the ED; as well as their feelings and  
119 emotions, using questions like 'Can you describe the environment you were  
120 in?' and 'Tell me about any feelings or emotions you experiences.'" Follow up  
121 questions were used to clarify thoughts, feeling and experiences if this  
122 information did not appear in the narrated story (Mishler, 2005). The  
123 interviews were semi-structured to ensure that key questions were answered  
124 in relation to the research aim whilst allowing participants to elaborate on  
125 issues they felt important. Interviews were performed between 2 and 23 days  
126 after the injury event. Interviews were conducted as soon as the patient felt  
127 they were able to participate. Interviews lasted between 9 and 42 minutes and  
128 were transcribed verbatim.

129

#### 130 Data analysis

131 The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006).  
132 Thematic analysis involves discovering, interpreting and reporting patterns  
133 and clusters of meaning within the data (Spencer et al 2014). Analysis  
134 involves constantly moving backwards and forward between the entire data  
135 set, to code the data, categorise the codes, analytical reflected and

136 construction themes (Braun & Clarke 2006). After several readings codes  
137 were assigned that described the content while still keeping the core content.  
138 The codes were grouped into categories and sub categories. During the  
139 whole process discussions between two of the authors (IS and EM) led to a  
140 refinement of the codes and categories in order to strengthen the credibility of  
141 the final thematic structure. The analysis resulted in four main themes.

142

143

## FINDINGS

144 The four themes that emerged are: initial impact of the trauma; environmental  
145 factors; communication styles; and reflecting on the trauma.

146

147 *Theme 1: Initial impact of the trauma*

148       ○ *I was in shock*

149 Participants reported how they felt both the physiological response of feeling  
150 cold, shaking, tachycardia – a racing heart - as well as the psychological  
151 response of a panic or disbelief that something like this could occur to them.

152 There was also a realisation that the state of shock protected them initially  
153 from the realisation of what had occurred: *"I'm not cold, its shock'. You just  
154 suddenly realise that something has happened to you"*(P9).

155

156       ○ *I was scared*

157 An emotional response to the trauma was described by a sense of fear and  
158 panic. These feelings of fear and panic overlapped with their arrival in the ED  
159 and were exacerbated by a lack of knowledge and uncertainty to the extent of  
160 their injuries. This is a feeling that would remain in the ED as well due to the  
161 lack of knowledge and control about the situation and the potential extent of  
162 their injuries: *"I can't explain the kind of sense of panic when you are lying at  
163 the side of the road, you think you have a serious injury and you just think  
164 nobody knows, (my wife) doesn't know, I don't know how bad this is, the  
165 people, there was a doctor there, but they can't do anything. I could have died  
166 there and then and never spoken to (my wife)"*(P13).

167

168       ○ *I was in pain*

169 Powerful descriptors, such as horrific and excruciating, were used describe  
170 the pain from the injury and procedures carried out in the ED: *"It was the pain.  
171 It felt like my body, my whole body was exploding."*(P1). They recalled being  
172 given analgesia, primarily morphine, for their injuries and recalled their pain  
173 being under control. Benefits of having pre-hospital analgesia were noted,  
174 making it easier to go through the initial assessments in the ED: *"My pain was  
175 very well controlled, obviously it was bad, at the scene it was horrific"*(P13).  
176 They recalled hallucinations or a feeling of detachment, resulting from the  
177 analgesia: *"They gave me some morphine and stuff and from that point I just  
178 felt a bit in the clouds really"*(P7).

179

180

## 181 *Theme 2: Environmental factors*

### 182 ○ *Perspectives on the physical environment*

183 Many participants arrived in the ED wearing hard collars to protect their  
184 cervical spine from injury until their neck could be assessed and cleared. This  
185 also involved being strapped down to a hard scoop on route to hospital and  
186 then lying flat on the bed with their head between two blocks, until their spine  
187 is medically cleared or waiting for CT scan results before being able to move.  
188 Therefore most participants described their initial view of the environment to  
189 be restricted to the ceiling and bright lights: *"But you're on your back, so your  
190 whole world is the ceiling"*(P12). This also contributed to patients feeling a  
191 loss of control and helpless to their situation: *'Claustrophobic. But I'm not a  
192 claustrophobic person... All I could do was look up. I couldn't see the people  
193 around me'*(P2). While lying flat, noise was a factor with the multitude of  
194 machines around: *"Oh my god, all these machines beeping"*(P1).

195

### 196 ○ *Atmosphere within the ED*

197 The dynamic combination of efficiency of the staff and their caring nature created an  
198 atmosphere in which these participants felt safe and cared for. Many participants  
199 commented on the alertness and preparation of the staff in the ED, which created a  
200 positive atmosphere: *"And then there was a kind of buzz about it... It was the  
201 atmosphere, of well I felt they were very on, what the French would call the on the  
202 "qui vive", they were alert and ready"*(P12). The environment also contributed to a

203 feeling of safety: *"Clean, comfortable, safe...just the ambience of the place. I don't*  
204 *know whether it's because its new, but it made me feel safe"*(P4).

205

206

207           ○ *Witnessing the trauma team at work*

208 Positive accounts from the study participants of witnessing the trauma team at  
209 work were related to the perceived harmony and efficiency of the trauma  
210 team, being treated with respect and the importance of not being alone.

211 There was a strong sense of safety and reassurance associated with  
212 witnessing the trauma team at work recounted by all the participants  
213 interviewed. There was a combination of the perception of efficiency of the  
214 trauma team with the compassion that the participants were treated with. This  
215 efficiency of the trauma team is demonstrated by the following quotation: *"In*  
216 *ED they were all in harmony with each other... They all had a job to do and*  
217 *they did it, in sequence and sometime in parallel, they just knew what to do*  
218 *and they did it"*(P4).

219

220 Participants almost unanimously reported that they felt respected by the staff  
221 in the ED. This came across in the way they were spoken to and cared for.

222 This was widely related to interactions between the team as well as with the  
223 participant: *"They treat you as a person, not as a lump of flesh. They do treat*  
224 *you with respect"*(P9).

225

226 Participants also felt like they were not alone in the ED with most recalling there  
227 always a member of staff in close proximity. They said that they were reassured that  
228 they had a healthcare professional nearby to attend to their needs if required. This  
229 was particularly important for those strapped down to a hospital bed, wearing a hard  
230 collar waiting for results of investigations: *"The fact that it is the same person coming*  
231 *back and not going away. And also making sure that I wasn't left on my own with*  
232 *nobody around. I don't think that ever happened. So my memory is that at no point*  
233 *was I left with nobody to say what's happening"*(P13).

234

235

236 *Theme 3: Communication styles*

237                   ○ *Informal – humour*

238 Participants felt respected by the staff in the ED; this came across in the way  
239 they were spoken to. There were recollections of the use of humour by nurses  
240 and paramedics, particularly when clothes were being removed, which helped  
241 to put them more at ease: *“I said ‘look at me lying here like this, everyone is  
242 looking at me’ But we were all having a laugh about it. But you know  
243 respectfully, because they did respect you as a person”*(P9). Humour was  
244 also used during some of the procedures: *“The nurse was talking to me while  
245 she was stitching my head and you know, just talking in general and we had a  
246 little laugh”*(P11).

247

248                   ○ *Pastoral – reassurance*

249 The feeling of reassurance that participants associated with the pastoral  
250 communication was felt to be hugely important as it reduced potential panic and  
251 made them more relaxed. It was also appreciated, as it helped the participants feel  
252 like they were treated as with respect and kindness, as human beings. One  
253 participant described the importance of good communication: *“Communication skills  
254 in that sort of situation are so so important. Made such a difference to me.... I guess  
255 you could equally say if I am alive here and my arm has been fixed and everything  
256 and they were horrible to me, well does it make any difference? Well it really does...it  
257 is probably something that could have easily been missed because obviously your  
258 main concern is treating my injuries but the reassurance is hugely important”*(P12).

259

260 When family were contacted it was hugely reassuring for patients and  
261 provided them with a sense of relief. However not all participants wanted their  
262 family to be present, this appears to be due to the additional worry that their  
263 family would bring, which would make the participant need to expend energy  
264 on reassuring their family, as well as feeling out of control in the situation.

265

266                   ○ *Formal – information giving*

267 When patients received enough information their injuries and treatment they felt safer  
268 and reassured: *“They were really good, you know they kept coming through, every  
269 step, somebody was explaining, telling me what was happening and talking me  
270 through what they were doing...I felt very much like I knew what was going on and I*

271 *knew why things were being done and what the plan was”* (P13). However some  
272 participants felt that the information given was lacking, particularly once transferred  
273 out of the resuscitation area: *“I tell you the truth, coming up from ED where I was*  
274 *constantly told what was happening, I’ve come up here and I think this is the third*  
275 *ward I’ve been in and not been told anything...I feel like I’ve been put in a corner and*  
276 *nobody has informed me of anything”*(P7). The following quotation described  
277 concerns about the lack of communication: *“I don’t think I would have rerun it any*  
278 *differently except for a bit more communication when everybody faded away. I would*  
279 *have liked that and a bit more talk about what was actually the matter and why they*  
280 *were doing what I thought they were going to do”*(P12).

281

#### 282 *Theme 4: Reflecting on the trauma*

283 Participants reflected on their feeling on leaving the ED and being transferred  
284 to the ward. They also spoke about plans to return home and the impact on  
285 their family and jobs. Participants spoke with hope about their future, although  
286 the impact of the trauma still remained, with concerned about potential  
287 complications and memories that remained. This theme, reflecting on the  
288 trauma has been divided into subthemes: I will be okay, I appreciate the  
289 health care system and looking to the future.

290

##### 291 *○ I will be okay*

292 There tended to be a sense of relief once they had been treated and  
293 stabilized in the ED and were ready to be transferred to the ward. This move  
294 to the ward was felt to be a move towards normalisation, a step towards a re-  
295 assimilation with the outside world: *“When they said they were going to put*  
296 *me on the ward, I suppose that’s when I started saying, ok...suppose I am as*  
297 *safe as they tell me I am. They know more than I do”*(P4). There was an  
298 element of reflection on surviving the injury and knowing they were going to  
299 be okay *“I now know how lucky I am to be alive”*(P8).

300

##### 301 *○ I appreciate the health care system*

302 There was a sense of appreciation throughout for the care provided as a result of the  
303 traumatic injury. A couple of the participants particularly expressed appreciated for

304 the NHS as a healthcare system, who felt that the NHS is: *“At its core it is a*  
305 *magnificent, unique service for people”*(P12).

306

307 With participants that had been transferred from a trauma unit into the MTC, as well  
308 as the participants that were taken directly to the MTC due to the nature of their  
309 injuries, there was appreciation of being taken to a centre that was a specialist in  
310 dealing with traumatic injuries. Being treated by professionals who deal with trauma  
311 day in day out, gave participants as sense of reassurance: *“I knew I was in safe*  
312 *hands”* (P4); and P10 who said: *“I see now why they send you to certain places for*  
313 *specific illnesses or conditions”*.

314

315           ○ Looking to the future

316 After surviving the traumatic injury and undergoing the period in ED, participants  
317 reflected on the impact on their lives, their future and the impact it would have on  
318 their families. For one in particular, the experiences has perhaps turned a potentially  
319 negative experience into a positive one, having a new appreciation for the fragility of  
320 life and the opportunity to make a change: *“I know I have a long and rocky road but it*  
321 *has made me realise I want a few changes in my lifestyle.”* (P8). Whereas for other  
322 participants there was a sense of coming out stronger *“Makes you very strong, you’re*  
323 *more determined to deal with it”*(P4).

324

325 However for one participant, who was a surgeon, who had broken his right  
326 arm in an accident, was still worried about the impact it was going to have and  
327 the potential for it to affect his career as a surgeon. However after the initial  
328 injury when he was at the roadside, fearing for his life, concerned about major  
329 bleeding from his pelvic injury, there was still a huge sense of relief that he  
330 was alive: *“Despite the fact I know that these injuries are going to keep me off*  
331 *work for a while, but yeah, its difficult to explain, huge sense of relief and I*  
332 *guess the only persisting thing after that was my work. Was I ever going to be*  
333 *able to operate again?”*(P13).

334

335

## Discussion

336 This study of 13 trauma patients explored the experience of care in the ED  
337 with the aim of providing insights about perceptions of care from the patients.

338 This study represents the first of its kind in the UK. It illuminated the complex  
339 array of emotions that are experienced by trauma patients in the specific  
340 context of the ED and demonstrates that many patients have a heightened  
341 awareness of their environment in the ED. The interaction with the trauma  
342 team is central to negating the initial fear, ambiguity and uncertainty  
343 experienced by most patients.

344

345 Liminality is a term used to describe an experience of uncertainty and is used  
346 to describe the state of being in-between (Bruce et al 2014). The betwixt and  
347 between phase (van Gennep, cited in Turner 1967) emphasizes the  
348 transitioning from one stage to another. Descriptions of liminality in health  
349 literature focus on transitions and temporary experiences that patients work to  
350 resolve and move beyond (Kelly 2008). In the context of life threatening  
351 illnesses, liminality is used to describe a psychosocial space for people living  
352 with end stage renal disease (Martin-McDonald and Biernoff 2002), HIV/AIDS  
353 (Kelly 2008) and cancer (Miles et al 2008).

354

355 The concept of liminality can help illuminate aspects of the findings from this  
356 study. Figure 1 has been developed from the findings using the stages of  
357 liminality to depict the stages of experience within trauma. The diagrammatic  
358 representation is intended to provide an overall picture of the trauma  
359 experience from the initial trauma through to preparing for discharge back to  
360 the outside world. The themes that emerged from the study can illuminate the  
361 feelings and emotions that occur within each stage of this process and what  
362 factors positively influence the experience.

363

364 *Separation* is the initial stage, relating to the immediate impact of the trauma  
365 and primarily related to the “initial impact of the trauma” theme. These initial  
366 emotions, feeling scared, are also identified in the studies by Jay (1996) and  
367 O’Brien and Fothergill-Bourbonnais (2004). The participants’ in the present  
368 study also recalled an awareness that they had been in shock, for example  
369 from a feeling of intense cold or their heart racing. Shock was also recognized  
370 in the O’Brien and Fothergill-Bourbonnais (2004) study as a physical  
371 phenomenon described as a feeling of intense cold.

372

373 The *transitional* stage is the time in the ED, primarily related to the  
374 communication styles and environmental factors themes. Participants who  
375 recalled emotions from their time in the ED often described emotions in terms  
376 of a range of experiences from scared to safe. Being scared was related to a  
377 loss of control, panic, anxiety, not knowing and being in pain, whilst feeling  
378 safe was related to being reassured, comforted, informed, in addition to the  
379 life-saving aspects of the ED such as the efficiency and competence of the  
380 trauma team. There was no straight path on the emotional trajectory, all  
381 participants' emotions fluctuated in the ED. Perceptions of compassionate  
382 care, competent management and a clean environment were associated,  
383 however, with reducing fear, worry and pain and increasing the feeling of  
384 safety. This resonates with the findings of previous studies (O'Brien and  
385 Fothergill 2004; Jay 1996; Wright 2011).

386

387 The impact of trauma and the admission to the ED has a small but emerging  
388 body of research. Whereas critical illness and admission to intensive care  
389 units has been well researched and patient memories of frightening  
390 experiences has been shown to potentially threaten their later psychological  
391 recovery (Adamson et al 2004; Schelling et al 1999). In general, traumatic  
392 events are very clearly remembered by those that experience them and are  
393 seldom or never forgotten (McNally 2005). Memories of traumatic or  
394 frightening events usually persist for longer periods than emotional memories  
395 (Lof, Berggren and Ahlstrom 2008). It is unknown if the vivid memories from  
396 the trauma or the hallucinations resulting from analgesia reported by  
397 participants will have a lasting impact.

398

399 Participants accepted that the health service providers were providing the  
400 best available care, so whether they drove past the local hospital to get to the  
401 MTC or they were transferred to the MTC following an initial assessment at  
402 the local hospital, they were compliant with treatment pathway. This has not  
403 been a factor in previous literature on patients' perceptions of trauma care in  
404 the ED, due to the recent set up of the major trauma network.

405

406 Most participants' in this study expressed satisfaction with the teamwork and  
407 appreciated rapid attention. Baldursdottir & Jonsdottir (2002) conducted a  
408 study to identify which nurse caring behaviours are perceived by patients in  
409 an ED as important indicators of caring and found that patient rated clinical  
410 competence as the most important of nurses caring behaviours. The  
411 organization, attitude and competence of the trauma team brought patients a  
412 sense of safety and security (O'Brien and Fothergill-Bourbonnais 2004).  
413 Wiman et al (2007) also found that competence generated feelings of comfort,  
414 confidence and satisfaction. Several studies have shown that the presence of  
415 staff and the caring relationship that is formed is an important factor with  
416 regards to the trauma patients coping with the traumatic injury, the unknown,  
417 their sense of security, hope and sense of well-being (O'Brien and Fothergill  
418 2004; Jay 1996; Wright 2011).

419

420 The findings of the present study have found that participants felt that they  
421 were treated with kindness, compassion, respect and with humanity in the ED.  
422 However Holbery (2014) identified emotional intelligence to be lacking  
423 amongst the trauma team in her reflective account of her experience of being  
424 both a relative of a trauma patient and a nurse. Holbery (2014) found care to  
425 be mechanical and protocol driven. None of the participants in this present  
426 study expressed feelings of vulnerability.

427

428 Compassion and competence of the trauma team were intertwined in the  
429 findings of this study. Caring is an essential element of nursing (Benner and  
430 Wrubel 1989). The DoH (2012) states that care is our core business and that  
431 of our organisations, and the care we deliver helps the individual person and  
432 improves the health of the whole community. Engagement with healthcare  
433 professionals is influenced by the emotional intelligence (EI) of the individuals  
434 within the trauma team. EI is defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990, p189) as a  
435 subset of social intelligence that involves 'the ability to monitor ones own and  
436 others feelings and emotions to discriminate among them and use this  
437 information to guide ones thinking and actions'. The findings of the present  
438 study have found that participants felt that they were treated with kindness,  
439 compassion, respect and with humanity in the ED.

440

441 Participants completed their narratives with reflections and resolutions for the  
442 future, looking forwards to discharge, family and work life after their trauma.

443 Many patients see the journey through the ED as a transition and the

444 experience generates new perspectives on their lives as they exit. This

445 represents their re-assimilation, in the final stage of the liminal period.

446 Emotionally, participants were relieved to be okay and appreciative of care

447 received. This resonates with findings in Wright (2011) who found that the

448 majority of participants interviewed expressed appreciation and thanks for

449 providing care in a time of duress. O'Brien & Fothergill-Bourbonnais (2004)

450 also found that the traumatic event has lead to a reawakening, giving a new

451 appreciation for the fragility of life which is supported by the findings in this

452 study.

453

#### 454 **Limitations**

455 As in most studies, all participants volunteered their time to be interviewed,

456 which may suggest that they are generally more proactive and interested in

457 scientific research. This could potentially mean that the participants had

458 stronger views on the experience of care. When it comes to the content of the

459 patients' descriptions of their experiences in the ED, similar results have been

460 reported in other studies and this partly confirms the transferability of the

461 results (O'Brien and Fothergill-Bourbonnais 2004; Wiman et al 2007). The use

462 of qualitative semi-structured interviews enables participants to describe their

463 experiences. The researchers knowledge and experience are important to

464 understand and interpret the material. A second person was involved in the

465 analysis of a sample of transcripts and the same themes identified, indicating

466 that the interpretation was authentic. The researcher was a novice in

467 conducting interviews, which may have impacted on the depth and breath of

468 the narratives analysed. Patient groups that were discharged from the ED and

469 those admitted directed to theatre or ICU from the ED were excluded. It is

470 possible that different perspectives may be voiced from these groups.

471 However the aim of the study was to explore the range and diversity of

472 perspectives rather than make generalisations as a whole.

473

474

475

### Conclusion

476

477

478

479

480

481

482

483

484

485

486

487

488

489

490

491

492

493

494

495

496

497

498

499

500

501

502

503

504

505

The study corroborates existing literature linking competent and compassionate care with patients' sense of safety. This study illuminated the multifaceted array of factors that influence the patients' experience of care in the ED. This combination of factors and the influence it has on their emotions differs between individuals and is likely to be influenced by multiple factors including age, gender, mechanism and severity of injury, recovery and treatment course as well as personal circumstances.

Participants in the liminal period entered the ED scared, in pain and in shock. For participants to feel safe, secure and reassured in the ED it was important for staff to quickly build rapport with the participants. With this rapport, trauma teams are able to communicate not only essential information, but also provide reassurance, show respect and humanity. Trauma teams working in a MTC are exposed to trauma on a daily basis, competence in the management of trauma is shown to the patients in the speed and precision in which tasks are completed. Compassion in care is remembered by patients and forms part of the picture they remember about their trauma experience.

Liminality is a useful construct that can help make sense of ambiguous experiences. Understanding liminality helps us to understand what it is that trauma patients seek from the healthcare service. An understanding of the patients experiences and emotions in the ED has implications for how nurses interact with patients and raises opportunities for strengthening holistic nursing care and also raises challenges around what can be improved.

506

507

508 **REFERENCES**

509 Adamson, H., Murgo, M., Boyle, M., Kerr, S., Crawford, M., Elliot, D. (2004)  
510 Memories of intensive care and experiences of survivors of a critical illness:  
511 an interview study, *Intensive critical care nursing*, 20 pp257-63

512 Balddursdottir, G., Jonsdottir, H. (2002) The importance of nurse caring  
513 behaviours as perceived by patients receiving care at an emergency  
514 department, *Heart and Lung*, 31 (1) pp67-75

515 Benner, P., Wrubel, J. (1989) *The primacy of caring*, Addison-Wesley, Menlo  
516 Park Canada

517 Braun, V., Clark, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative*  
518 *research in psychology* 3(2) pp77-101 [Online] Available at:  
519 <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa> (Accessed  
520 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015)

521 Bruce, A., Shields, L., Molzahn, A., Beuthin, R., Schick-Makaraoff, K.,  
522 Shermac, S (2014) Stories of liminality: Living with life threatening illness,  
523 *Journal of Holistic nursing*, 32 (1) pp35-43

524 Cole, E., Crichton, N (2006) The culture of a trauma team in relation to human  
525 factors, *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 15 pp 1257-1266

526 Department of Health (2012) *Compassion in practice: Nursing, midwifery and*  
527 *care staff our vision and strategy*, The Stationary Office, London

528 Department of Health (2013) *The NHS Outcomes Framework 2014/15*, the  
529 Stationary Office, London

530

531 Franzen, C., Bjornstig, U., Jansson, L., Stenlund, H., Brulin, C (2008) Injured  
532 road users experiences of care in the emergency department, *Journal of*  
533 *Clinical Nursing*, 17 (6) pp726-735

534

535 Hayes, J., Tyler-Ball (2007) Perceptions of nurses caring behaviours by  
536 trauma patients, *Journal of Trauma Nursing*, 14 (4) pp187-190

537

538 Holbery, N (2015) Emotional Intelligence – Essential for trauma nursing,  
539 *International Emergency Nursing*, 23 (1) pp13-16

540

541

542 Jay, R (1996) Reassuring and reducing anxiety in seriously injured patients: a  
543 study of Accident and Emergency interventions, *Accident and Emergency*  
544 *Nursing*, 4 pp 125-131

545

546 Kelly, A. (2008). Living loss: An exploration of the internal space of liminality.  
547 *Mortality*, 13, pp335-350.

548

549 Little, M., Jordon, CF., Paul, K., Montgomery, K., Philipson, B (1998)  
 550 Liminality: a major category of the experience of cancer illness, *Social science*  
 551 *medicine*, 47 (10) pp1485-94

552 Lof, L., Bergreen, L., Ahlstrom, G (2008) ICU patients recall of emotional  
 553 reactions in the trajectory from falling critically ill to hospital discharge: Follow-  
 554 ups after 3 and 12 months, *Intensive and critical care nursing*, 24 pp108-121

555  
 556 Martin-McDonald, K., & Biernoff, D. (2002). Initiation into a dialysis-dependent  
 557 life: An examination of rites of passage. *Nephrology Nursing Journal*, 29, 347-  
 558 352, 376.  
 559

560 McNally, RJ (2005) Debunking myths about trauma and memory, *Canadian*  
 561 *Journal of Psychiatry*, 50 pp817-822

562  
 563 Merrill, A., Hayes, J., Cluckey, L., Curtis, D (2012) Do they really care? How  
 564 trauma patients perceive nurses caring behaviors, *Journal of Trauma Nursing*,  
 565 19 (1) pp33-37  
 566

567 Miles, L., Jordens, C., Paul, K., Montgomery, K., & Philipson, B. (1998).  
 568 Liminality: A major category of the experience of cancer illness. *Social*  
 569 *Science Medicine*, 10, 1485-1494.  
 570

571  
 572 Mishler, E.G. (2005) Patient stories, narratives of resistance and the ethics of  
 573 humane care: a la recherche du temps perdu. *An Interdisciplinary Journal for*  
 574 *the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine*. 9: 431–451  
 575

576 National Audit Office (2010) *Major Trauma Care in England*, London, The  
 577 Stationary Office  
 578

579 National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (2007) *Trauma:*  
 580 *Who Cares?*, NCEPOD, [Online] Available at: [www.ncepod.org.uk](http://www.ncepod.org.uk)  
 581

582 NHS.UK (2014) *Emergency and urgent care services: Major trauma services*,  
 583 [Online] Available at:  
 584 <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/Emergencyandurgentcare>  
 585 [services/Pages/Majortraumaservices.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/Emergencyandurgentcare/services/Pages/Majortraumaservices.aspx) (Accessed 12th May 2015)  
 586

587 O'Brien, J., Fothergill-Bourbonnais, F (2004) The experience of trauma  
 588 resuscitation in the emergency department: themes from seven patients,  
 589 *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, 30 (3) pp216-24  
 590

591  
 592 Salovey, P., Mayer, J (1990) Emotional intelligence, Imagination, cognition  
 593 and personality, 9 (3) pp185-211, Sage publications

594

595 Schilling, G., Stoll, C., Haller, M., Briegel, J., Manert, W., Hummel, T., et al  
596 (1998) health related quality of life and post traumatic stress disorder in  
597 survivors of acute respiratory distress syndrome, *Critical Care Medicine*, 26  
598 pp 651-9

599

600 Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Ormston, R., O'Connor, W., Barnard, M. (2014)  
601 Analysis: Principles and Processes. In Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton  
602 Nicholls, C., Ormston, R (eds) *Qualitative research practice: A guide for*  
603 *social science students and researchers* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) London, SAGE, ch 10

604

605

606 Stamatou, CA., Sorensen, PA., Telfer, KM (1996) Meeting the challenge of  
607 the older trauma patient, *American Journal of Nursing*, 96 (5) pp40-47

608

609 Turner, V. (1967). *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual*. Ithaca,  
610 NY: Cornell University Press.

611

612 Van Gennep, A (1960) *The rites of passage*, University of Chicago Press,  
613 Chicago

614

615 Wiman, E., Wikblad, K., Idvall, E. (2006) Trauma patients encounters with the  
616 team in the Emergency Department – A qualitative study. *International*  
617 *Journal of Nursing Studies*, 44 pp714-722

618

619 Wright, A (2011) Trauma resuscitation and patient perceptions of care and  
620 comfort, *Journal of Trauma Nursing*, 18 (4) pp231-238

621