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A21 - The impact of covid-19 pandemic on intensive care workload at Mater Dei Hospital in Malta.

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Introduction:

The aim of the study was to determine the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on intensive care workload at our only acute main general hospital on the island. During the pandemic surge in March 2021, our intensive care was running at 200% capacity. Mater Dei Hospital has a 20-bedded adult intensive care catering for a population of 500,000.

Methods:

This is a prospective cohort study conducted in the Covid-19 Intensive Care Unit at Mater Dei Hospital, Malta. Data analysed is from March 2020 to May 2021. Data collected daily from admission until death or discharge from ICU.

Results:

A total of 261 patients with severe acute respiratory distress syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-Cov-2) required admission to our intensive care. ICU facilities required expansion into a total of 5 Intensive Care Units, therefore reaching a capacity of 44 intensive care beds during the peak month of March 2021. A maximum of 21 patients were admitted per week culminating to a total of 33 Covid Intensive Care beds during the month of March 2021. A total of 179 patients (68.6%) required mechanical ventilation for a median duration of 11 days per patient. Proning was required in 124 mechanically ventilated patients (70.5%). 50 patients (20%) required CRRT with a maximum number of 7 patients per day requiring CRRT.

Conclusion:

Covid-19 pandemic transformed the way how we provide critical care with improved bed capacity, ICU triage and ICU devices. This study highlighted the need for more clinical guidelines and their availability for online use. This will positively impact the care of non-covid patients. It also highlighted the need for more training of non ICU staff to allow for surges in ICU capacity. The Covid 19 pandemic has seen Mater Dei hospital already investing in ICU personnel and equipment as this cannot be reactive to large scale events but must be a proactive planned strategy to enhance resilience of our ITU.

References:

Wynne R et al, Journal of Clinical Nursing, 00, 1-10, 2021

Goh et al, Critical Care Journal, 24:215, 2020