# Article information:

Waiting Patiently: An Empirical Study of Queue Abandonment in an Emergency Department | Management Science  
<https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/abs/10.1287/mnsc.2014.2058>

# Article summary:

1. Queue abandonment in hospital emergency departments is influenced by the length of the queue and observable queue flows, even after accounting for wait time.

2. The presence of an additional person in the queue or an additional arrival to the queue increases the probability of abandonment, equivalent to a 25-minute or 5-minute increase in wait time, respectively.

3. Patients are sensitive to being "jumped" in the line and respond differently to people who are more sick or less sick moving through the system. This customer response to visual queue elements is not currently considered in most queuing models.

# Article rating:

Appears moderately imbalanced: The article provides some useful information, but is missing several important points or pieces of evidence that would be required to present the discussed topics in a balanced and reliable way. You are encouraged to seek a more balanced perspective on the presented issues by exploring the provided research topics and looking at different information sources.

# Article analysis:

The article titled "Waiting Patiently: An Empirical Study of Queue Abandonment in an Emergency Department" presents findings on queue abandonment in a hospital emergency department. While the study provides valuable insights into factors influencing abandonment, there are several potential biases and limitations that need to be considered.

One potential bias is the focus on observable queue flows and visual queue elements as determinants of abandonment. While these factors may indeed influence patient behavior, they do not capture the full range of reasons why patients might choose to abandon the queue. Factors such as perceived urgency of their condition, availability of alternative healthcare options, or personal constraints (e.g., time commitments) are not addressed in this study. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from this research may not fully reflect the complexity of patient decision-making.

Another limitation is the assumption that wait time alone does not fully explain abandonment behavior. The authors argue that even after controlling for wait time, additional factors like observing more people in the queue or arrivals to the queue impact abandonment probability. However, it is unclear how these factors interact with wait time and whether they are truly independent predictors of abandonment. Without a clear understanding of these relationships, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about their impact.

Furthermore, the article does not provide sufficient evidence or analysis to support its claims regarding customer response to visual queue elements. The authors state that patients are sensitive to being "jumped" in line and respond differently to people who are more sick or less sick moving through the system. However, no empirical data or statistical analysis is presented to substantiate these claims. Without such evidence, these assertions remain speculative and unsupported.

Additionally, while the article acknowledges that managers have an opportunity to intervene by altering available information for waiting customers, it does not explore potential risks or unintended consequences of such interventions. For example, providing misleading or inaccurate information could lead to increased frustration among patients and potentially worsen their experience rather than improving it.

Moreover, the article appears to have a one-sided focus on customer behavior and satisfaction, neglecting the perspective of healthcare providers. Understanding the impact of queue abandonment on healthcare professionals, resource allocation, and overall system efficiency is crucial for a comprehensive analysis. By solely focusing on patient behavior, the article fails to provide a balanced view of the issue.

In conclusion, while the article "Waiting Patiently: An Empirical Study of Queue Abandonment in an Emergency Department" offers valuable insights into factors influencing queue abandonment, it has several limitations and potential biases. The study's narrow focus on observable queue flows and visual queue elements overlooks important factors that may influence patient decision-making. Unsupported claims regarding customer response to these elements further weaken the article's credibility. Additionally, the lack of consideration for potential risks and the absence of a provider perspective limit the comprehensiveness of the analysis.

# Topics for further research:

* Factors influencing patient decision-making in emergency department queue abandonment
* Perceived urgency of condition and its impact on queue abandonment in healthcare settings
* Availability of alternative healthcare options and its influence on patient queue abandonment
* Personal constraints and their role in patient decision-making to abandon the queue
* Interactions between wait time
* observable queue flows
* and arrivals in predicting queue abandonment
* Impact of visual queue elements on patient behavior and satisfaction in healthcare settings

# Report location:

<https://www.fullpicture.app/item/438d86305d03e3891cbc0544c9e9937a>