Unspoken “Rules” of EMS

What We Think We Might Know for Sure

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Please Do Not Shoot the Messenger!
Lee’s Disclaimer
So...

I would like to make you a *little* mad!

I hope to make you think... *hard!*
We Think We Know So Much...

- Because...
  - We are taught...
  - We are told...
  - We’ve always done it that way...
  - We follow protocols!

- Is it all true???
- What has experience taught us?
- What does the data show?
Is it Time to Consider a...

- Paradigm shift?
- Is EMS
  - Primary care?
  - Initial care?
  - Introduction to the health care system?
  - Not that emergent?
An oxymoron (plural oxymorons or oxymora) (from Greek, "sharp dull") is a figure of speech that combines normally contradictory terms. Oxymorons appear in a variety of contexts, including inadvertent errors and literary oxymorons crafted to reveal a paradox.

...Wikipedia
Some of Life’s Examples

- “in the event of a water landing...”
- Mental Health Unit/patient
- Internal Revenue Service
- Jumbo shrimp
- Accurate weather forecast
- Boneless chicken wings
- Legal brief
- Same difference
- Once again
- Detailed summary
- Pretty ugly
- **Cost effective prehospital care**
Are killing ourselves from the INSIDE???
So, Let's Talk About...

- EMS education
- EMS operations
- Patient care
- Inter-personal communications
- Lee’s personal observations (griping)
EMS Education and Training

- Bag-Mask-Ventilation
- Nasal-pharyngeal airways
- Cherry red skin
- Hypoxic drive
- Epiglotitis
- Battle Signs
EMS Operations

• **Oxymorons?**
  - We need to have paramedics!
  - Without the fire departments there would be no ambulance service
  - Volunteers do all the calls
  - The calls happen in the evening when everyone is out of work or school.
Level of Care Provided

Basic Life Support: 79%

Advanced Life Support: 21%
Certified EMTs by Level
Statewide

N= 60,904
Valid after 12/1/2011
Certified EMTs by Level

- NYC:
  - CFR: 3638
  - EMT-B: 10549
  - EMT-I: 22
  - EMT-CC: 1799
  - EMT-P: 2242

- REMO:
  - CFR: 0
  - EMT-B: 0
  - EMT-I: 0
  - EMT-CC: 0
  - EMT-P: 703
Certified EMTs by Level

- Southwestern:
  - CFR: 63
  - EMT-B: 901
  - EMT-I: 110
  - EMT-CC: 97
  - EMT-P: 49

- Mt Lakes:
  - CFR: 799
  - EMT-B: 248
  - EMT-I: 74
  - EMT-CC: 63
  - EMT-P: 63
Whose Doing the EMS Calls...

- Commercial: 49%
- Municipal: 25%
- Independent: 12%
- Hospital: 7%
- FireDept/Districts: 6%
- Other: 1%

Legend:
- Commercial
- Municipal
- Independent
- Hospital
- FireDept/Districts
- Other
Time of Emergency Call
Assessing and Treating Patients

- The “Look Test” – Earl Evans
- Lung sounds
- Vital Signs... “the numbers”
- Mechanism of Injury
- 2 beers!
- “It’s not about what you see... it’s about what you suspect”
  - “you can observe a lot by just watching”
    - Yogi Berra
Assessing and Treating Patients

• “We respond to lots of cardiac arrests... and intubate TONS of people!”
• “We are ‘street surgeons’... we have trauma all the time!”
• “He can’t be injured, he’s just drunk!”
• “We know our business!”
New York Statewide PCR Data 2004 through 2008

Note: 2006 and 2007 Includes FDNY Data
Statewide PCR Data - Call Type

- 78.8% Emergency
- 20% Non-emergency
- 1.1% Stand-by

Statewide PCR Data
PCR - Medical vs Trauma
Percentages based on Presenting Problems
Presenting Problems
Under 2% of the Total Call Volume

- Haz mat
- Environmental Cold
- Heat
- Shock
- Burns
- Poisoning/Accident
- Obvious Death
- Obstructed Airway
- Multiple Trauma
- Amputation
- OB/GYN
- Unconscious/Unresponsive
- Substance Abuse
- Spinal Injury
- Syncope
Emergency Cardiac Calls
Based on 146,872 cardiac calls

93%

7%

Cardiac Related
Cardiac Arrest
Oxygen Administered to Chest Pain
(Based on 122,526 Documented Calls)

NO
23%

YES
77%
Cardiac Arrests Defibrillated
(Based on 12,700Calls Documented)

YES 26%

NO 74%
Endotracheal Intubations

As the initial presenting problem on the PCR

N = 1171
Customer Service

- What’s the definition of an Emergency?
- Whose definition are we using?
- Communicating with our patients
- Asking your patients permission...
Is This an Emergency?

- What is the definition of a medical emergency?
  - A medical emergency is an injury or illness that poses an immediate threat to a person's life or long term health. These emergencies may require assistance from another person, who should ideally be suitably qualified ... Dependant upon the severity of the emergency, and the quality of any treatment given, it may require the involvement of multiple levels of care, from a EMS to an emergency department to a specialist.
  - Wikipedia
This is the Patient’s Emergency!

• When a request for EMS is made, someone has access the emergency system, because...
  ► They can no longer deal with their current problem...
  ► They are having a crisis!
  ► They have no one else to call!
  ► You are EMS!

• Remember, this is **NOT YOUR EMERGENCY!!!**

• The emergency is defined by the caller!
Communicating with Our Patients

- Starts with...
  - Professional appearance
  - Appropriate uniform
  - Clean and neat
  - Personal choices
    - Jewelry
    - Tattoos
    - Body piercings
    - Pins, buttons and patches
The DREADED Nickname...

Babe  Pops  Dear Sweety

Hon or Honey  Sunshine  Bud or Buddy  Dude

... and all of your local favorites
Bedside Manners

• **Bedside manner** is a term describing how a care provider communicates with a patient...
• **Good** bedside manner?  
  or  
• **Poor** bedside manner?

*Hugh Laurie – “House”*
“Bedside Manners”

- The term was first used in Britain to describe a doctor’s attitude/ambiance when examining a sick patient in bed.
- If the doctor had a “good bedside manner”, he treated the patient with respect and care.
- The patient was made comfortable and reassured that the illness outcome would be positive.
Talking to the Patient

• Asking to assess or treat the patient
  ► Take their blood pressure
  ► Start an IV
  ► Go to the hospital

► ... You are asking permission to do your job... STOP!
... and the State Says...

- You have to carry a valid EMT card on your person at all times.
- You have to use black pen on the PCR.
- You have to have red lights on when you are transporting a patient.
- All DOAs have to be transported by ambulance.
- If you are a basic EMT are riding with an AEMT, you can perform ALS procedures.
- Certification remains valid if you are enrolled in a refresher.
Conclusion...

• Do we really save lives?
• Most of the time... NO!
  ▶ Patients die in spite of us!
  ▶ Patients live to spite us!
• But!
  ▶ We make lives better!

- Bringing Out the Dead, 1999
EMS Responders
September 11, 2001

- Keith Fairben - NY Presbyterian Hospital
- Andre Robert Lahens - FDNY EMS
- Carlos Lillo - FDNY EMS
- Yamel Merino - Metrocare Ambulance
- Richard Pearlman - Forest Hills Vol. Ambulance
- Ricardo Quinn - FDNY EMS
- Mario Santoro - NY Presbyterian Hospital
- Mark Schwartz - Hunter Ambulance
- David Marc Sullins - Cabrini Medical Center
- Zhe Zack Zeng - Brighton Volunteer Ambulance
- Deborah Reeve - FDNY EMS (March 15, 2006)

Yamel Marino and her son Kevin
• Paul Bazonet
  Glens Falls, NY—Warren County
  Date of Death: January 3, 2010
  Empire Ambulance Service

• Karen Hand
  Lisle, NY—Broome County
  Date of Death: October 5, 2010
  Broome Volunteer EMS

• LeRoy Kemp
  Barton, NY—Tioga County
  Date of Death: January 13, 2010
  Tioga Emergency Squad
Vital Signs EMS Conference - 2012

- **Where:** OnCenter, Syracuse
- **When:** October 18 through 21
- **Information:** www.vitalsignsconference.com
Questions?
Thank You So Much for Coming!