Management of emergencies in adults with congenital cardiac disease.

The aim of the study was to assess the quantity and nature of emergencies affecting adults with congenital cardiac disease (CCD) and evaluate infrastructural requirements for adequate management. There is an increasing number of adults with CCD requiring specialized complex care. This multicenter study evaluated all emergency admissions to 1 of 5 centers for adults with CCD within 1 year. Within 1 year, there were 1,033 admissions of adults with CCD, and 201 (160 patients; age 16 to 71 years) were emergencies. Underlying cardiac anomalies were univentricular heart (22%), complete transposition (14%), tetralogy of Fallot (21%), and others (43%). Seventy percent of patients had undergone previous cardiac surgery. The main reason for acute admission was cardiovascular (arrhythmia, heart failure, syncope, aortic dissection, and endocarditis). Diagnostic procedures most often assigned were echocardiography (n = 223), chest x-ray (n = 95), Holter electrocardiography (n = 85), cardiac catheterization/electrophysiologic study (n = 39), and others (n = 143). Forty-six patients underwent surgery (cardiovascular n = 41, general n = 5) or electrophysiologic treatment (n = 41). One hundred twenty-six of 201 emergencies (63%) required cooperation with another specialized department: surgery (n = 46), internal medicine (n = 42), neurology (n = 12), ophthalmology (n = 6), otorhinolaryngology (n = 5),
gynecology (n = 5), psychiatry (n = 4), radiology (n = 3), dermatology (n = 2), and orthopedics (n = 2).
In conclusion, physicians and consultants attending adult patients with CCD need a high degree of
specialized experience concerning the cardiac anomaly to manage emergencies properly.
Furthermore, a wide range of noncardiac diagnostic and therapeutic procedures must be available.
Data support the demand for a multidisciplinary approach in specialized centers for adequate care of
adults with CCD.