INTRODUCTION

- Hospital resources are not keeping up to the demands of the increasing patient volumes (Cheng & Sullivan, 2013)
- Emergency Departments are looking for ways to decrease overcrowding
- This literature review examined the impact Nurse Practitioners have on patient throughput within emergency departments

Emergency Department Nurse Practitioner

- Nurse Practitioners have been working in emergency department settings since the 1970’s
- Nurse Practitioners have practiced in British Columbia since 2005, but they are underrepresented in British Columbia’s emergency departments (CRNBC, n.d.; Sangster-Gormley, 2014)
- Within the emergency department, Nurse Practitioners work in a variety of settings such as minor treatment areas, triage, and trauma settings

METHODS AND MATERIALS

- A literature review was performed using 14 primary studies
- Nurse Practitioners were compared to physicians, physicians assistants and medical residents
- Patient flow was measured through the following variables:
  - Left without Being Seen rates
  - Length of Stay times
  - Door To Provider times

RESULTS

- Nurse Practitioners have demonstrated that they are effective at decreasing ‘Left Without Being Seen’ rates and ‘Door To Provider’ times
- Patient’s cared for by Nurse Practitioners had comparable length of stay times as those cared for by other service providers

CONCLUSION

- Emergency Department Overcrowding will continue to worsen unless changes are made in the way care is currently delivered
- Nurse Practitioners can play a role in decreasing overcrowding within emergency department settings by decreasing Left Without Being Seen rates and Door to Provider times, but they may not decrease patients’ overall Length of Stay
- The analysis from this literature review did not find any negative impacts on LOS, LWBS rates or DTP rates, which demonstrates that ENPs can assist with patient flow but their contribution to cost savings should be further explored.
- Further high quality research should be performed to explore the impact of Nurse Practitioners within emergency department settings

REFERENCES

