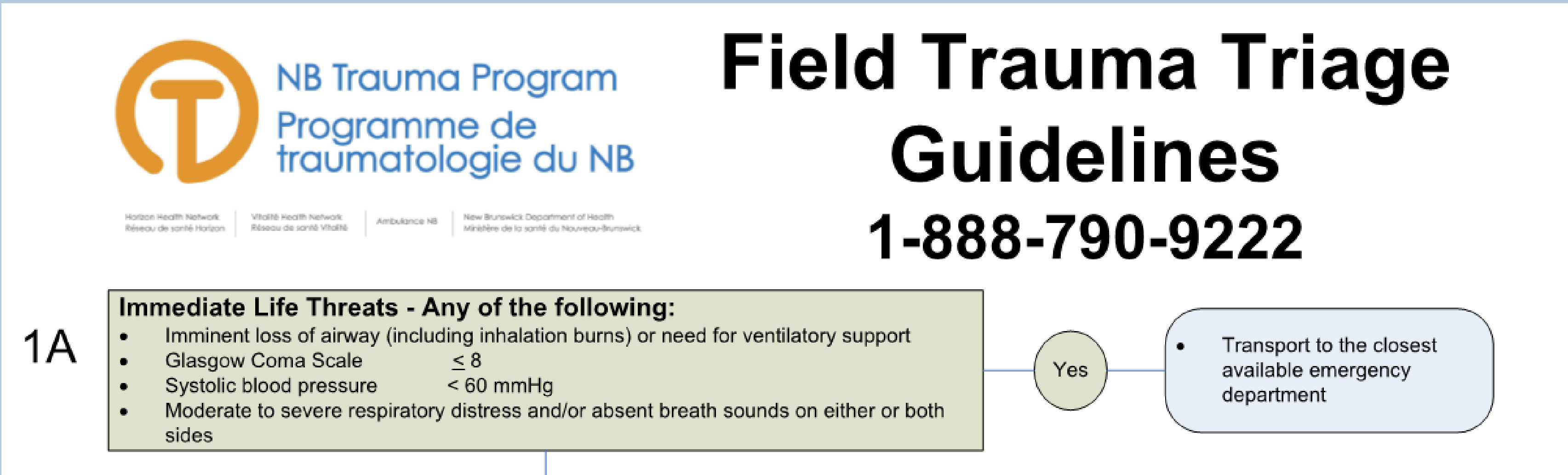


FIELD TRAUMA TRIAGE IN NEW BRUNSWICK: UNDERSTANDING THE ‘IMMEDIATE LIFE THREAT’ POPULATION

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Background

Provincially standardized Field Trauma Triage Guidelines (FTTG) were implemented in New Brunswick in 2010. These guidelines include an “Immediate Life Threat” step (Step 1A of the FTTG) to ensure those in need of immediate resuscitation are taken to the closest trauma centre. We sought to describe the cohort of patients transported directly to a Level V trauma centre after having been assessed as qualifying under the Immediate Life Threat criteria of the FTTG.



Method

Patients who were assessed by paramedics to have an ‘Immediate Life Threat’ and who were taken directly to a level V centre between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2017 were extracted from the NB Trauma Registry. Descriptive methodologies describe predominant mechanisms of injury, time to initiate trauma transfer, whether these patients required critical interventions in the Level V centre and how often each facility received Immediate Life Threat trauma patients.

Conclusion

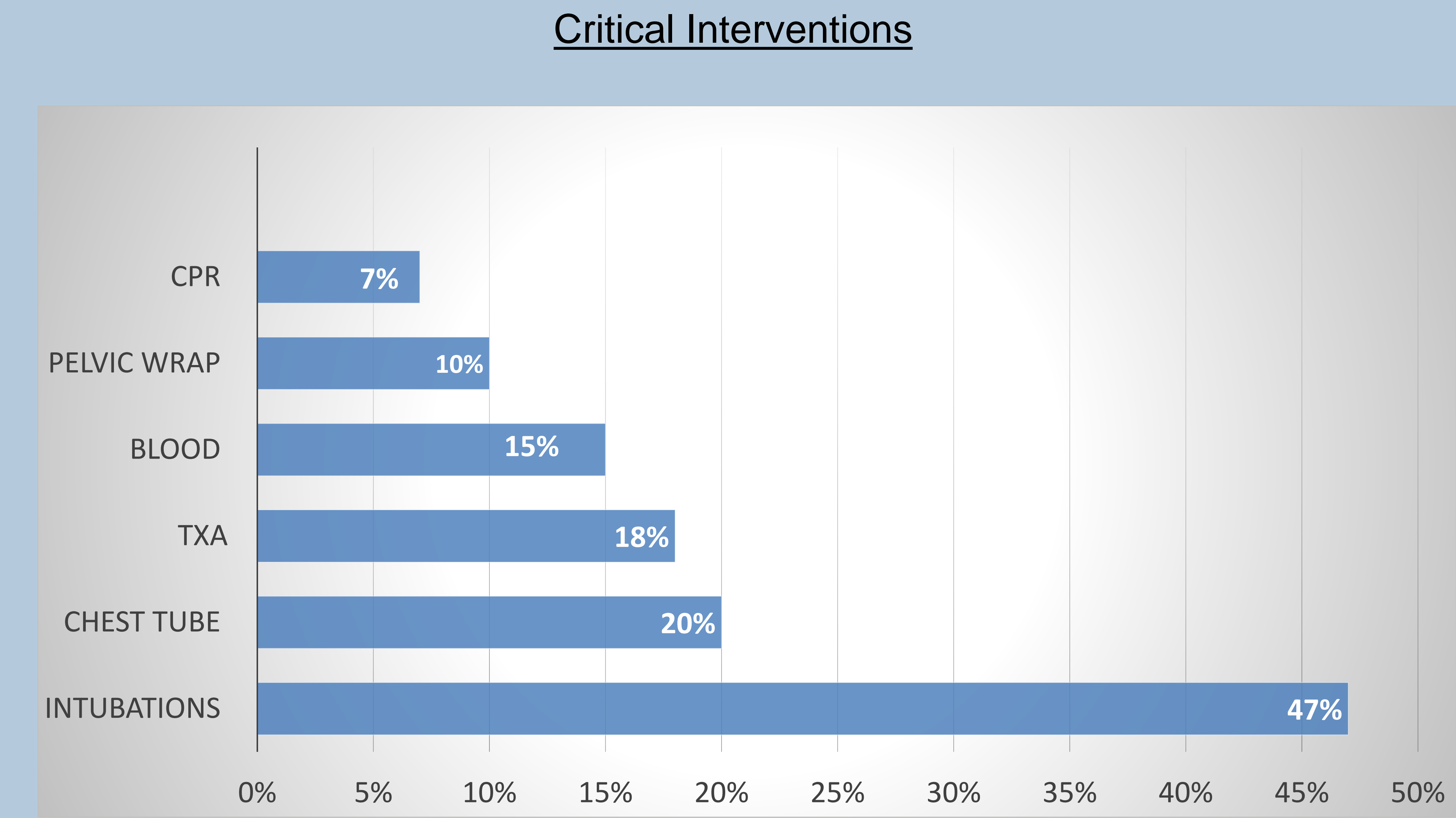
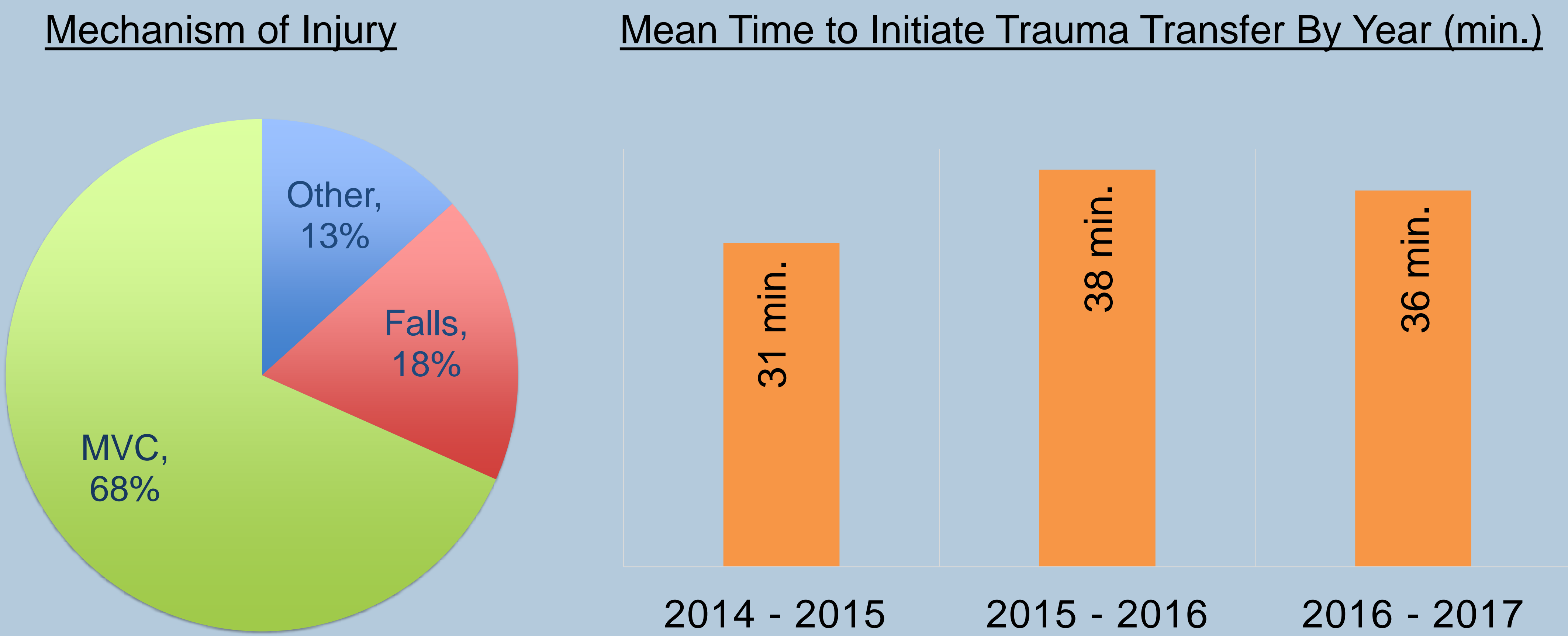
- ‘Immediate Life Threat’ criteria within New Brunswick’s provincial Field Trauma Triage guidelines does capture patients who require urgent intervention at the closest available facility
- The low frequency of Immediate Life Threat patients reinforces the need for supporting education to Level V designated trauma centres in New Brunswick. Ongoing exposure to trauma patient simulation may be an important opportunity for these centres.
- Despite low frequency, “Immediate Life Threat’ patients have timely access to higher levels of care within New Brunswick’s trauma transfer system.

Results

Five of the 12 Level V designated centres assessed 78% of the patients overall, with seven of these designated centres seeing fewer than five Immediate Life Threat patients during the entire study period.

Of the 5381 Field Trauma Triage activations over the three year study period:

- 60 (1%) patients qualified under the inclusion criteria of Immediate Life Threat (Step 1A of the FTTG)
- 63% required a critical intervention in the Emergency Department
- 82% were found to be males



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