

Zombie Idea

Emergency Department Crowding

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GATEWAY LECTURE SERIES

Insightful, Interactive Lectures from Gateway's Research Chairs
First Tuesday of each month @12pm by Zoom



Zombie Idea

“A zombie idea is a view that’s been thoroughly refuted by a mountain of empirical evidence but nonetheless refuses to die, being continually reanimated by our deeply held beliefs”. Krugman 2013 NYT



Define crowding





Zombie Idea

Non-urgent patients are responsible for ED crowding.

Zombie Idea

Diverting non-urgent patients away from the ED will solve crowding.



“Diversion Danger”

Sick people missed

Doesn't fix crowding

Ineffective

Not patient-centred



Zombie Idea

Diverting or fast-tracking a sore throat doesn't get a fractured hip an inpatient bed.



Emergency Department Compartment Syndrome



System Problem

In-Patient

Med, Surg, ICU,
Psych & LTC

Primary Care

Fam Med, NPs &
Pediatrics

Home Care

PT, OT,
Wound, Etc

Advanced Imaging, PharmD, EMS



“Furniture fallacy”



Deadly Delays

Elderly Held Overnight

Higher Mortality*

Need More Beds*

Roussel et al

JAMA 2023

SGEM#436



Delays Associated with Badness

Jones et al

Emergency
Medicine Journal
2022

Lauque et al

Journal of Clinical
Medicine 2022

Singer et al

Academic
Emergency
Medicine 2011

Eidstø et al

Internal &
Emergency
Medicine 2024



Zombie Solutions



Triage Away



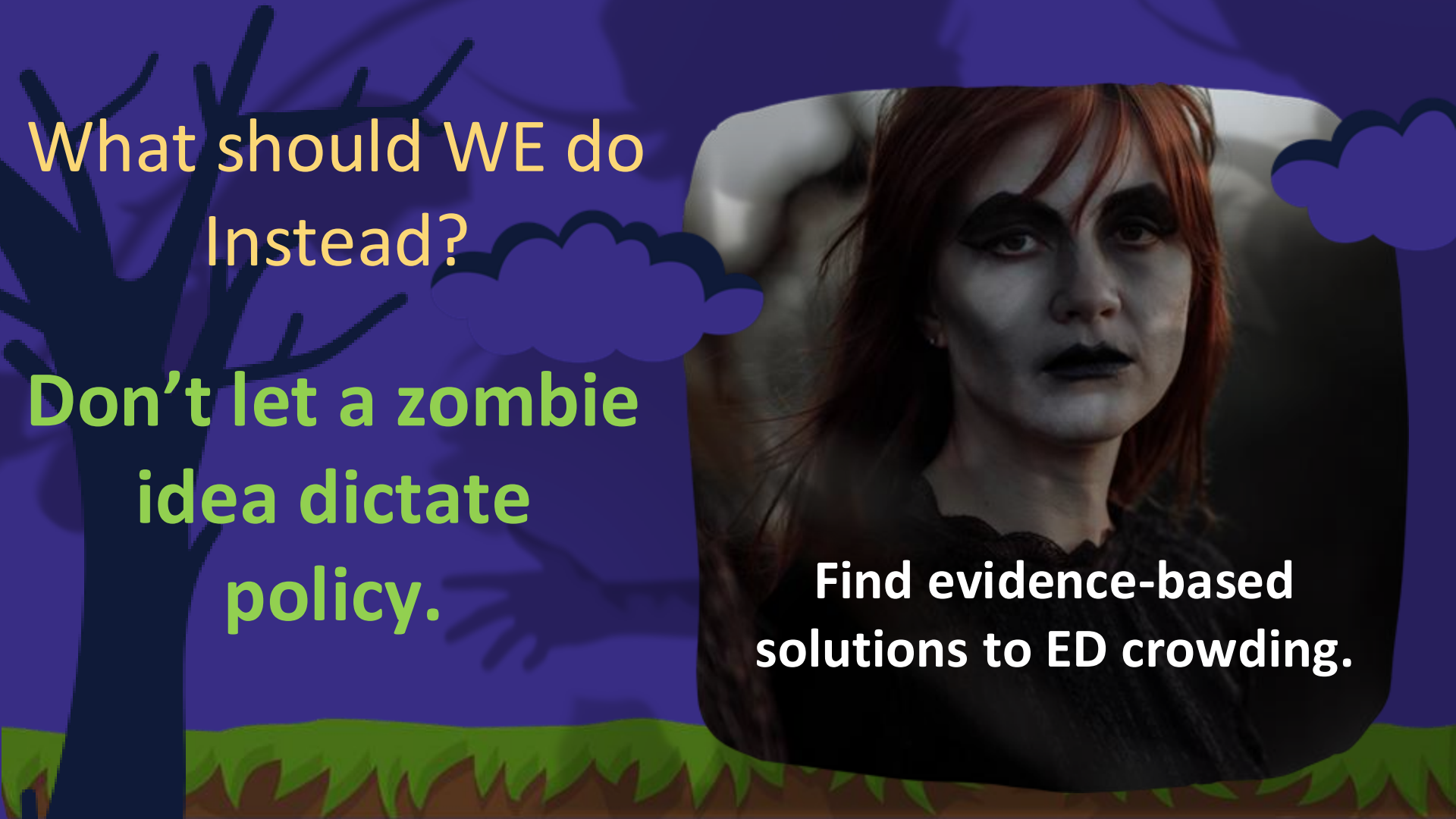
Fast Tracks



Doc in Triage

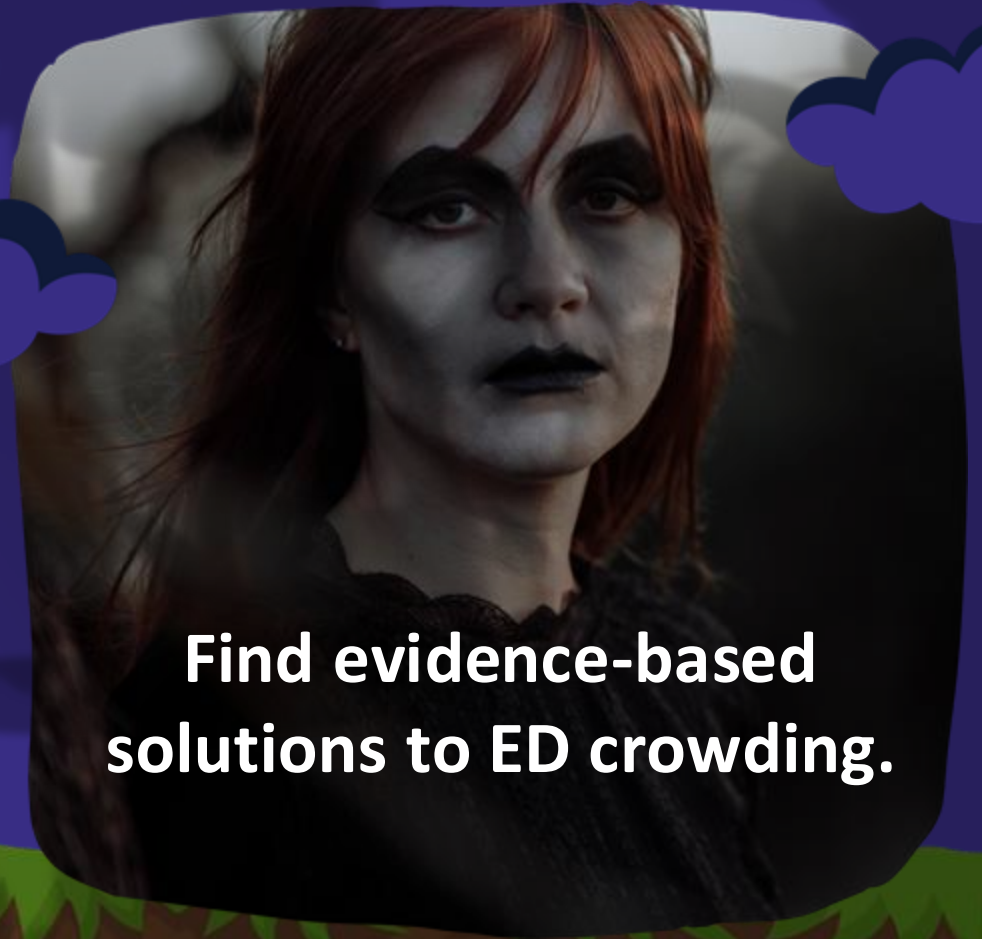


Bigger ED



What should WE do
Instead?

**Don't let a zombie
idea dictate
policy.**



**Find evidence-based
solutions to ED crowding.**

Who's Keeping the Zombie Alive?



Politicians



Administrators



Media

Stop Feeding these Zombie Myths



- ✗** *Crowding is an ED issue*
✓ It's a healthcare system problem
- ✗** *Non-urgent patients are the cause*
✓ Non-urgent patients take little time & resources
- ✗** *It's not harmful to board patients in the ED*
✓ Boarding is associated with increased mortality

best way to kill
a zombie idea?

Stop
Believing
it !!!!



RIP
Emergency
Department
Crowding

Fix
The
System.



Thank you!

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