

After-Hours Care in Family Practices in Saskatoon

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Why is After-Hours Care Important?

- Accessible care is one of the pillars of the Patient's Medical Home, where patients can access medical advice and information on accessing care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week¹



- When existing clinics offer extended hours, there can be a reduction in Emergency Department utilization²
- When patients receive primary care after-hours, there is a reduction in Emergency Department use for non-urgent conditions, as well as improved patient outcomes³

Objectives

- Determine what kind of after-hours care and information family practice clinics provide to patients in Saskatoon
- Map the collected data within Health Networks boundaries
- Compare the accessibility and after-hours care of family medicine clinics in each network

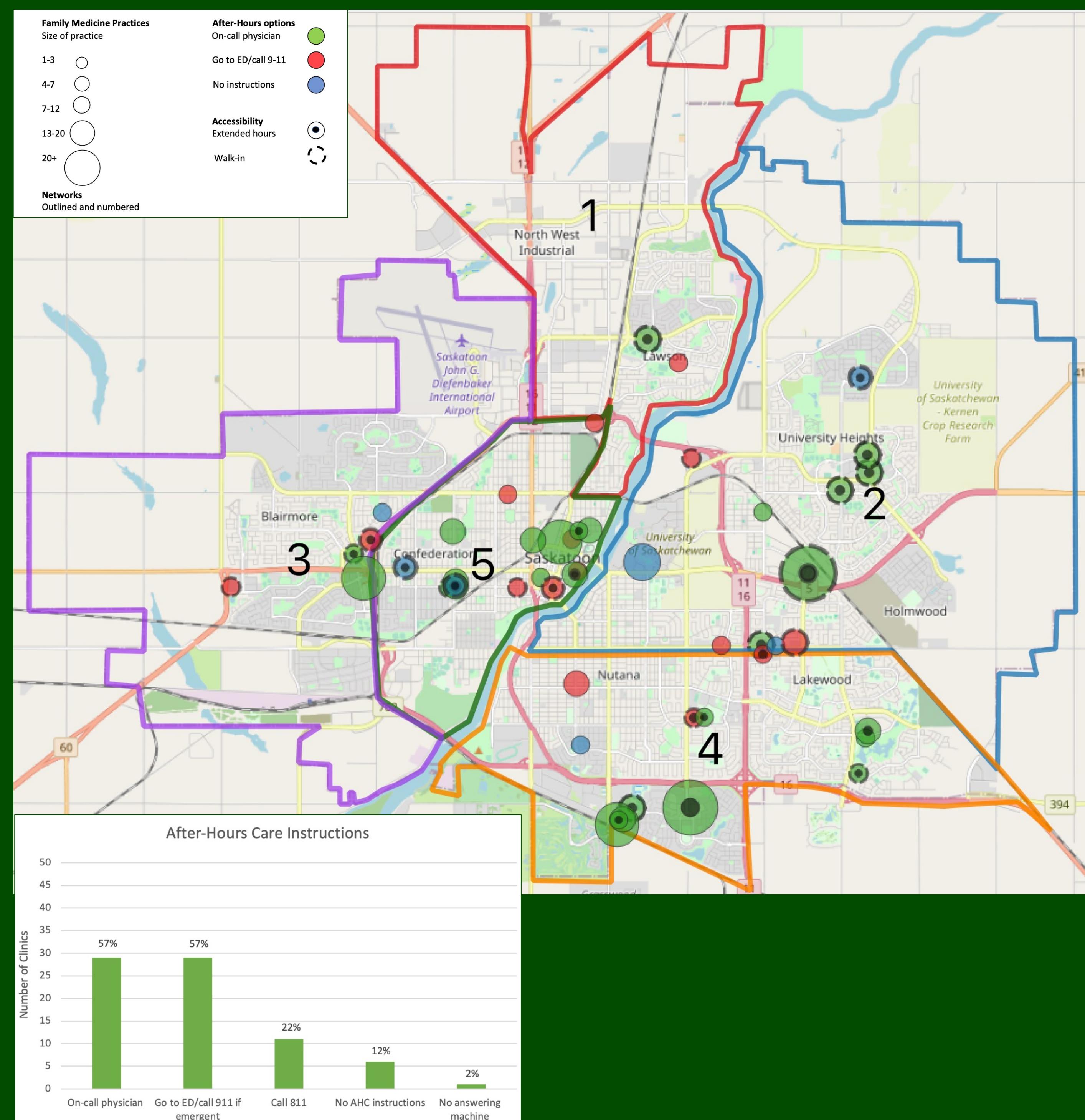
Methods

- This project received ethics exemption from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board at USask
- Saskatoon clinics were phoned after-hours for info
- The type of information each clinic offered was noted
- Data was coded and categorized
- Results were mapped using open access QGIS mapping software
- Accessibility of clinics and the populations of each network were compared using the 2020 Neighbourhood Profiles of Saskatoon document⁴

Research Question

Are there disparities in the type of after-hours care offered to different communities in Saskatoon?

Main Findings



Conclusion

- 57% of family medicine clinics in Saskatoon provide access to some form of after-hours care, such as phone consultation or an on-call physician in the office for defined hours
- Saskatoon's Core (5) has the highest number of clinics, after-hours on-call physicians, extended hours clinics, and walk-in clinics per population. This could be due to factors such as office availability or people seeking care near work, historical patterns, etc.
- Saskatoon North (1) and West (3) have the lowest access to family medicine clinics, after-hours care, extended hours, and walk-in facilities per population
- 811 is an under-utilized service with only 22% of clinics mentioning 811 as an option for after-hours health advice

Limitations and Future Directions

- There was subjectivity interpreting the after-hours care offered as described on telephone answering machines
- Some hours varied due to COVID and others were not clearly defined. Walk-in hours were highly variable.
- Going forward, we will explore the scope of after-hours care offered by directly interviewing physicians and staff.

References

- [1.https://patientsmedicalhome.ca/files/uploads/PMH2019Summary_ENG.pdf](https://patientsmedicalhome.ca/files/uploads/PMH2019Summary_ENG.pdf)
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- [3.https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3475839/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3475839/)
- [4.https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/community-services/planning-development/research/neighbourhood-profiles/neighbourhood_profiles_2020.pdf](https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/community-services/planning-development/research/neighbourhood-profiles/neighbourhood_profiles_2020.pdf)

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