GILLIAN PALMER

ACCIDENT + EMERGENC

OBJECTIVES ASSESSMENT

1. What are the key conditions managed by the Essex and Herrs Air Ambulance team and does the management differ from hospital based acute care.

Patients treated by the Essex and Herrs Air Ambulance team are by definition critical, requiring immediate care or transportation to a Major Trauma Centre or critical care unit. Patients attended included trauma patients and patients in cardiac arrest - either traumatic arrest or medical arrest. The team were highly trained in the management of major trauma and arrest protocol often performing CPR and rapid sequence intubation at scene.

2. What are the roles of the different team members within the Essex and Herrs Air Ambulance service.

Each crew consisted of a senior doctor - usually an Accident and Emergency Consultant or registrar or senior Anaesthesiologist who would run the scene. They were assisted by a paramedic trained in trauma care and rapid sequence intubation who would manage packaging of the patient for transportation of the patient either by road or air. Finally there was a pilot, usually ex RAF, Army or police pilots who were very experienced at landing in difficult environments. The pilot would often help the medics whenever they could especially with difficult patient extractions and carrying equipment to scene.

3. To observe first hand the roles of Essex and Herrs Air Ambulance team and to assist whenever possible.

I was lucky enough to go on several missions including medical cardiac arrests and major trauma including one unfortate chap who fell three storeys from a roof. I assisted with cardiac compressions, bagging and applying a Kendrick Splint for a broken femor.

4. To understand the priorities and complexities of managing acute and critical care emergencies.

One of the key elements of the work done by Essex and Herts Air Ambulance team is to recognise what can and cannot be achieved at scene with a critical patient without technical investigations and sophisticated equipment. Often treatment is aimed at stabilising the patient for transportation which may mean reducing bleeding and protecting an airway. This is often enough to make the diffenence between life and death for a patient.