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Study: Hospitalists cut stays for complex cases

At least where management of complex cases is concerned, hospitalists can cut patient lengths of stay. According to the research published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, patients with conditions like congestive heart failure, stroke, asthma or pneumonia seem to benefit from a hospital's presence. (On the other hand, their presence doesn't seem to affect other key measures, such as 30-day mortality rates and in-hospital mortality.)

To get a sense of hospitalists' impact, the study looked at records of 2,913 patients treated at teaching facilities with hospitalists on board and 6,124 patients at hospitals without hospitalists. The data collected was for care taking place between July 1, 2002 and June 20, 2004. Researchers found that patients care for by hospitalists had average stays of 5.01 days compared with 5.87 days for those who weren't.