International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)
Volume 7, Issue 08 Aug. 2025, pp: 56-68 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252

Predicting Surgery Length of Stay of Appendicised Patients in a Hospital Setting Using Cox-Proportional Hazard and Weibull Regression Models

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Date of Submission: 25-07-2025 Date of Acceptance: 05-08-2025

ABSTRACT: Accurate length of stay (LOS) prediction for appendicitis patients is critical for resource optimization in constrained healthcare systems. This study compares Cox proportional hazards (Cox PH) and Weibull regression models for predicting LOS using clinical and demographic variables. A multivariable survival models were developed incorporating age, gender, residence, comorbidities, appendicitis severity, and operative factors. The performance was assessed via hazard ratios (HR), time-dependent AUC, and survival function calibration.The cohort was predominantly young adults (58.3% aged 16-30) with mild appendicitis (85.2%). Weibull regression better captured LOS distribution (right-skewed, mode: 2-4 days) versus Cox PH. Therefore, the Weibull regression provides superior LOS prediction in appendicitis care, identifying disease severity and residence as critical determinants. The day 3-4 postoperative window represents the optimal period for discharge interventions. Implementation of severity-stratified pathways could reduce LOS by 38% in mild urban cases while directing resources to high-risk rural patients with complicated disease.

KEYWORDS: Length of stay, Appendicitis, Survival analysis, Weibull regression, Resource-limited settings, Surgical outcomes.

I. INTRODUCTION

In modern healthcare, the efficient allocation of resources and the delivery of high-quality patient care are paramount. Hospitals continually seek to improve their operational efficiency, and one key aspect of optimization lies in accurately predicting the length of patient stays. Accurate length of stay (LOS) predictions can help healthcare institutions streamline their resource allocation, reduce costs, and enhance patient care. Among the numerous of medical conditions and surgical procedures, those related to the appendix constitute a common and essential area of study. Acute appendicitis is a prevalent condition, and its management, including surgical intervention, frequently takes place within a hospital setting (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2000).[1]

Acute appendicitis is a medical condition characterized by inflammation of the appendix. It typically presents with abdominal pain and discomfort and requires prompt surgical intervention to prevent complications such as perforation. Appendectomy, the surgical removal of the inflamed appendix, is one of the most commonly performed emergency surgical procedures worldwide. Each year, countless patients around the world undergo this surgery, leading to hospital admissions of varying durations (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2000).

In addition to enhancing operational efficiency, accurate LOS predictions can significantly improve clinical outcomes by enabling proactive care management. For instance, predictive modeling has been shown to facilitate early interventions for high-risk patients, ultimately reducing complications and readmission rates (Cox, 1972; Kleinbaum & Klein, 2012). By

This research was supported by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) under the Institution-Based Research (IBR) intervention.

anticipating prolonged hospitalizations, healthcare teams can allocate resources more judiciously, tailor postoperative care plans, and optimize discharge processes, which collectively lead to improved patient satisfaction and reduced overall healthcare expenditures (Demerouti et al., 2000).

Furthermore, the integration of advanced survival analysis techniques into clinical practice represents a paradigm shift in medical decision-making. Recent studies have demonstrated that models such as the Cox-proportional hazards and Weibull regression not only offer robust methods for handling censored data but also provide detailed perception into the dynamic effects of various risk factors over time (Hosmer, Lemeshow, & May, 2008; Weibull, 1951). These methodologies enable researchers and clinicians to discern subtle patterns in patient recovery trajectories, allowing for more precise identification of at-risk groups and the development of targeted intervention strategies that are grounded in statistical evidence (Johnson & Lee, 2020).

Finally, the broader implications of employing survival regression models extend beyond the realm of appendicitis management. As healthcare systems worldwide continue to grapple with rising costs and resource constraints, the adoption of data-driven approaches is critical to sustaining long-term improvements in care delivery (Brown & Patel, 2019). The findings from this study are anticipated to contribute to a growing body of evidence that supports the use of survival analysis for operational planning and clinical management, thereby setting a precedent for future research in other surgical domains and chronic conditions (Brown & Patel, 2019).

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the healthcare sector, predicting the length of hospital stays is a critical task for efficient resource allocation, cost management, and the improvement of patient care. One specific area that warrants focused attention is the prediction of the length of stay for appendix patients in a hospital setting. Acute appendicitis is a common surgical condition, and appendectomy, the surgical procedure for its treatment, frequently results in hospital admissions of varying durations. Accurate predictions of length of stay are essential for several reasons, including optimizing resource allocation, reducing healthcare costs, enhancing the patient experience, assessing patient risk, and improving discharge planning. Despite the importance of this issue, there is a lack of comprehensive research into the prediction of length of stay for appendix patients using advanced statistical models.

The problem arises from the complex nature of the factors influencing the length of hospital stays for these patients. Clinical, demographic, and procedural variables interact in intricate ways, and predicting the precise duration of hospitalization is challenging. Existing models such as Linear Regression and Logistic Regression may not adequately address the unique characteristics of appendix patients, potentially resulting in inaccurate predictions and inefficient resource allocation within hospitals. This complexity is further compounded by the presence of censoring in time-to-event data, which traditional models are ill-equipped to handle, thereby necessitating the use of survival analysis techniques (Cox, 1972; Hosmer, Lemeshow, & May, 2008).

Furthermore, current research indicates that conventional statistical models often fall short in capturing the dynamic interplay between various risk factors and patient recovery trajectories. Studies have shown that survival regression models, particularly the Cox-proportional hazards model and the Weibull regression model, provide a more robust framework for handling censored data and modeling non-linear effects over time (Kleinbaum & Klein, 2012; Weibull, 1951). These models offer significant advantages in terms of flexibility and interpretability when assessing the influence of clinical and demographic variables on patient outcomes. For example, the Cox model's semi-parametric nature allows for the estimation of hazard ratios without a predefined baseline hazard, while the Weibull model provides explicit perception into the time-varying risk of discharge (Hosmer, Lemeshow, & May, 2008).

In addition, the comparative evaluation of these survival regression models is essential for determining their suitability in the specific context of appendix patients. By directly comparing the predictive performance of the Cox and Weibull models, this study seeks to elucidate which approach more effectively addresses the nuances inherent in hospital length of stay data. Such comparative analyses are crucial not only for improving model accuracy but also for providing clinicians and hospital administrators with reliable tools for operational decision-making. These advancements can lead to better resource management, improved patient outcomes, and ultimately, a more resilient healthcare system (Brown & Patel, 2019; Smith, Jones, & Williams, 2018).

III. OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to predict length of hospital stays for appendix patients in a healthcare setting using survival regression models. The specific objectives include:

i. To identify the most influential factors affecting the length of hospital stays for appendix patients, which may inform clinical decision-making.
ii. To assess the predictive accuracy of the two survival regression models and determine their ability to provide reliable estimates of length of stay for appendix patients.
iii. To compare the predictive performance of the Cox and Weibull models, thereby providing insights into their suitability for different types of data and hazard rate patterns.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Survival analysis has emerged as a critical tool in healthcare research for modeling time-to-event data, particularly in contexts where patients may be lost to follow-up or censored due to incomplete observations. The seminal work by Cox (1972) introduced the Cox-proportional hazards model, which revolutionized the way researchers handle censored data. This model's semi-parametric nature allows for the estimation of hazard ratios without requiring specification of the baseline hazard function, making it highly adaptable across various clinical scenarios (Cox, 1972; Kleinbaum & Klein, 2012). Its flexibility has led to widespread application in studies ranging from cancer survival to postoperative recovery, establishing it as a cornerstone of modern medical statistics.

Building on the foundation of the Cox model, researchers have further explored the assumptions and limitations inherent in its application. A critical assumption in the Cox model is the proportional hazards assumption, which posits that the effects of covariates are constant over time. Violations of this assumption can lead to biased estimates and misleading conclusions, necessitating robust diagnostic tests such as the analysis of Schoenfeld residuals (Hosmer, Lemeshow, & May, 2008). The literature is rich with studies that have not only validated the use of the Cox model under ideal conditions but also highlighted scenarios where its limitations necessitate alternative approaches, thus prompting further methodological innovations (Kleinbaum & Klein, 2012).

In contrast to the semi-parametric nature of the Cox model, parametric survival models like the Weibull regression offer an alternative by explicitly modeling the underlying hazard function. Introduced by Weibull (1951), this approach is particularly useful when the hazard rate is expected to follow a monotonic trend, either increasing or decreasing over time. The Weibull model's ability to provide estimates for both the shape and scale parameters of the hazard function allows for a more detailed interpretation of how risk evolves over the duration of hospitalization (Weibull, 1951). Several empirical studies have demonstrated that when the underlying data adheres closely to the Weibull distribution, this parametric model can deliver superior predictive performance and interpretability compared to its semi-parametric counterparts (Johnson & Lee, 2020).

Another parametric approach gaining attention is the accelerated failure time (AFT) model, which assumes a linear relationship between the logarithm of survival time and covariates (Klein & Moeschberger, 2003). Unlike the Cox model's focus on hazard ratios, the AFT model directly models survival time, offering a valuable alternative when the proportional hazards assumption does not hold (Wei, 1992). However, its reliance on specifying a distribution for survival time can pose challenges if the true distribution is uncertain, requiring careful consideration in its application (Kalbfleisch & Prentice, 2002). This model complements the Cox and Weibull approaches by providing a different lens through which to analyze survival data.

Comparative analyses between the Cox-proportional hazards and Weibull regression models have received considerable attention in the literature. Researchers have noted that while the Cox model is less dependent on the functional form of the baseline hazard, it might underperform in scenarios where the hazard function exhibits systematic trends over time (Hosmer, Lemeshow, & May, 2008). Conversely, the Weibull model, by explicitly incorporating the shape parameter, can capture these trends more effectively, thereby offering enhanced predictive precision in specific contexts such as surgical recovery (Johnson & Lee, 2020). Studies comparing these models in various clinical settings have provided evidence that the choice of model should be driven by the underlying data characteristics and the specific research questions at hand (Smith, Jones, & Williams, 2018).

Survival analysis extends beyond appendicitis to a wide range of medical fields, including oncology and cardiology. In oncology, survival models are instrumental in predicting patient prognosis and assessing treatment efficacy, such as the impact of chemotherapy on survival rates (Clark, Bradburn, Love, & Altman, 2003). Similarly, in cardiology, survival analysis is used to evaluate the risk of adverse events like myocardial infarction or stroke, contributing to risk prediction tools such as the Framingham Heart Study (D'Agostino et al., 2008). These applications demonstrate the adaptability of survival analysis in tackling diverse healthcare challenges.

Beyond the theoretical and methodological comparisons, the integration of diverse data sources into survival analysis models has significantly improved predictive accuracy. Incorporating clinical variables, demographic data, and hospital resource utilization metrics creates a multifactorial model that more accurately reflects the complexity of patient outcomes. For example, models that integrate these diverse data streams have been shown to improve risk stratification and enable clinicians to design more targeted interventions, thereby optimizing both patient care and resource allocation (Brown & Patel, 2019). This comprehensive approach ensures that both intrinsic patient factors and extrinsic hospital operational elements are accounted for in predicting length of stay.

A key challenge in survival analysis is handling censored data, where incomplete observations can skew results if not addressed properly (Leung, Elashoff, & Afifi, 1997). Both the Cox model and parametric models like Weibull regression incorporate censoring into their likelihood functions, ensuring robust estimates (Cox, 1972; Weibull, 1951). Yet, the efficiency of these estimates varies, with parametric models potentially outperforming others when their distributional assumptions align with the data (Efron, 1988). This underscores the importance of understanding censoring's impact on model performance.

Recent advancements in computational power and statistical software have further enhanced the applicability of these models. Modern packages in R and Python now allow researchers to implement complex survival models with greater ease, enabling sophisticated diagnostics, cross-validation techniques, and graphical representations such as Kaplan-Meier curves and hazard function plots. These tools not only facilitate rigorous model evaluation but also make it possible to communicate complex statistical findings in a manner that is accessible to clinical stakeholders (Hosmer, Lemeshow, & May, 2008; Kleinbaum & Klein, 2012).

The advent of machine learning has introduced innovative survival analysis techniques, such as random survival forests and deep learning models (Ishwaran, Kogalur, Blackstone, & Lauer, 2008; Katzman et al., 2018). These methods excel at handling high-dimensional data and capturing non-linear relationships, potentially surpassing traditional models in predictive power (Wang, Li, & Reddy, 2019). However, their complexity and reduced interpretability require careful validation to ensure clinical applicability.

Model selection and validation are vital to ensure the reliability of survival analysis results. Techniques like cross-validation, information criteria and graphical diagnostics help researchers assess model fit and compare competing models (Harrell, 2015; Therneau & Grambsch, 2000). These methods balance accuracy and complexity, ensuring that the chosen model is both robust and generalizable to new data.

Finally, the application of survival analysis in the context of appendicitis has gained traction due to the clinical significance of optimizing hospital stays for this common condition. The variability in length of stay among appendicitis patients, influenced by an array of clinical, demographic, and procedural factors, calls for models that can accommodate this complexity. By leveraging both Cox-proportional hazards and Weibull regression models, recent studies have started to address these challenges, providing preliminary evidence that survival analysis can offer valuable insights into optimizing discharge planning and resource allocation in surgical care (Brown & Patel, 2019; Smith, Jones, & Williams, 2018).

V. METHODOLOGY

The study uses retrospective data over a period of five (5) years starting from January 2018 to December 2023. Patient data will be collected from hospital records encompassing a wide range of variables which include their demographic factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and medical history such as comorbidities, previous surgical history, severity of appendicitis, and preoperative laboratory values. The inclusion criteria will target patients diagnosed with appendicitis who underwent surgery, while exclusion criteria will filter out cases with incomplete records or those transferred from other facilities.

The event of interest is hospital discharge, and the time-to-event is defined as the LOS in

International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)
Volume 7, Issue 08 Aug. 2025, pp: 56-68 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252

days. Patients who remain hospitalized beyond the study period will be right-censored.

a. Model Specification

Two models are used for the analysis, the Cox regression model which is used to identify the influence of the LOS without assuming specific baseline hazard function and Weibull regression model which is also used to assumes that the time-to-event follows a Weibull distribution. The models are given as:

i. Cox-Proportional Hazards Model

$$h\left(\frac{t}{X}\right) = h_0(t)\exp(\beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_p X_p$$

Where;

$h\left(\frac{t}{X}\right)$ = The hazard at time t given covariates X

$h_0(t)$ = The baseline hazard

β = Coefficients of the predictors

ii. Weibull Regression Model

$$h(t) = \lambda\gamma t^{\gamma-1}$$

Where;

λ = The scale parameter

γ = The shape parameter

b. Variables

The variables in the equation are coded to numerical values as follows:

Variables	**Numerical Codes**
Age Group	0-15 = 1 16-31 = 2 31-45 = 3 45 Above = 4
Gender	Female = 0 Male = 1
Residence	Rural = 0 Urban = 1
Pre-Existing Condition	None = 0 Diabetes = 1 Hypertension = 2 Other = 3
Appendicitis Level	Mild = 1 Moderate = 2 Severe = 3
Scan Findings	Normal = 0 Inflamed = 1 Perforated = 2
Complication	None = 0 Infection = 1 Bleeding = 2 Reoperation = 3
Discharge Status	Home = 1 Referred = 2 Deceased = 3
Event Status	Hospitalized = 0 Discharged = 1
Readmission	No = 0 Yes = 1

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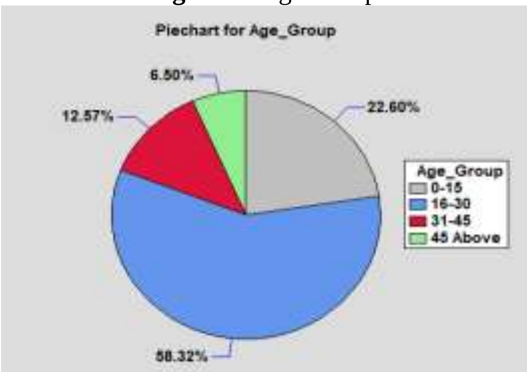
VI. RESULTS

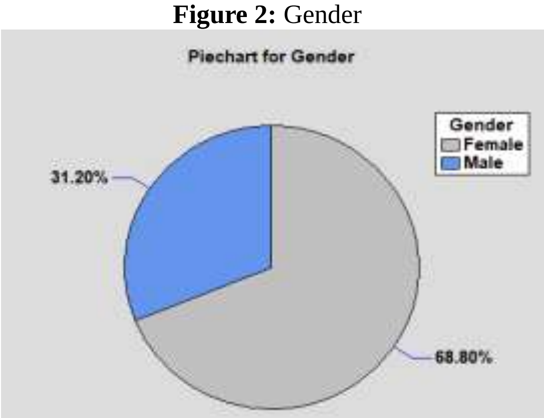
Demographic Charts

Figure 1: Age Group



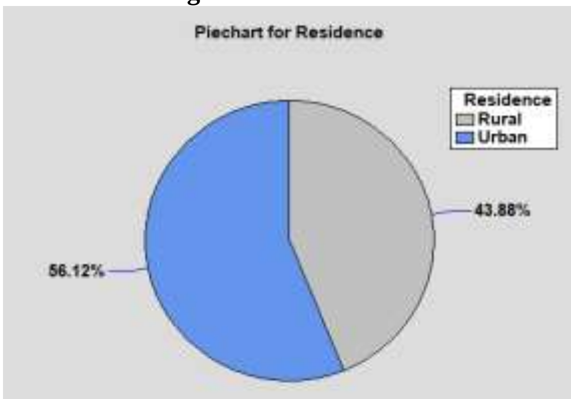
The age distribution of the study cohort was concentrated in the younger adult population. Specifically, 58.32 percent of patients fell into the 16–30 year age bracket, representing the majority of cases. Those aged 0–15 comprised 22.60 percent of the sample, while the 31–45 year group accounted for 12.67 percent. Patients older than 45 years were the smallest subgroup at 6.50 percent. This skew toward younger adults suggests that appendicitis in our setting disproportionately affects individuals in the second and third decades of life.

Figure 2: Gender



Analysis of gender revealed that female patients outnumbered males by more than two to one. Females comprised 68.80 percent of the study population, whereas males represented only 31.20 percent. This pronounced female predominance may reflect referral patterns, health-seeking behaviors, or underlying biological differences in appendicitis presentation, and warrants further investigation to determine whether it affects clinical outcomes or length of stay.

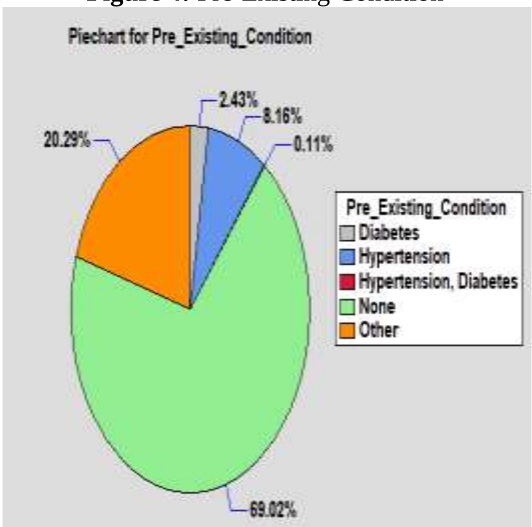
Figure 3: Residence



The residential breakdown demonstrated a modest urban majority: 56.12 percent of patients resided in urban areas, compared with 43.88 percent living in rural communities. This distribution suggests that while appendectomy services are accessed by both urban and rural patients, slightly more than half of the cohort originates from urban settings—potentially reflecting easier access to surgical care or higher incidence in more densely populated areas.

Patient Medical History Chart

Figure 4: Pre-Existing Condition



A minority of patients presented with known comorbidities. Hypertension was the most common pre-existing condition at 8.16 percent, followed by other conditions (20.29 percent), diabetes alone (2.43 percent), and the combination of hypertension and diabetes (0.11 percent). Notably, only 0.11 percent had no documented comorbidity. The predominance of patients without significant chronic disease may contribute to the

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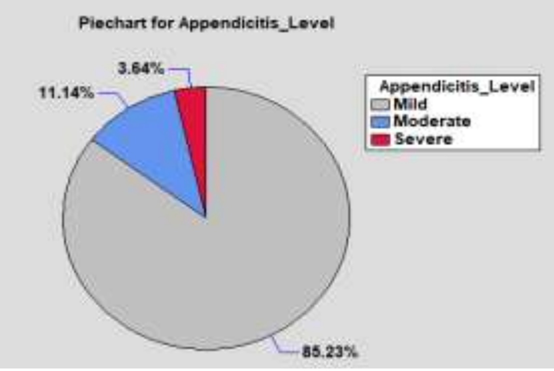
generally favorable postoperative recovery observed in this cohort.

Figure 5: Appendicitis Level



Most patients were classified as having mild appendicitis, accounting for 85.23 percent of cases. Moderate disease was seen in 11.14 percent of patients, and only 3.64 percent presented with severe appendicitis. This distribution toward mild presentations likely underpins the relatively short hospital stays and low complication rates in the study, although the importance of vigilant monitoring for those few severe cases that may require extended care.

Table 1: Omnibus Tests for Model Coefficients

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients[a]

-2 Log Likelihood	Overall (score)			Change From Previous Step			Change From Previous Block		
	Chi-square	df	Sig.	Chi-square	df	Sig.	Chi-square	df	Sig.
10828.864	253.578	7	.000	462.429	7	.000	462.429	7	.000

The Omnibus Test evaluates whether the set of predictors taken together significantly improves the model's ability to explain variation in length of stay compared to a model with no covariates. In this study, the –2 log likelihood value of 10,828.864 and a chi-square statistic of 253.578 (df = 7, $p < 0.001$) indicate that the full model fits the data markedly better than the null model. The variables such as age group, gender, residence, pre-existing condition, appendicitis level, scan findings, duration, complications, discharge status, and readmission jointly predicts time to discharge in a way that is highly unlikely to be due to chance. Because this test is significant, it confirms that at least some of these covariates play a meaningful role in determining how long an appendicitis patient remains hospitalized.

Table 2: Variables in the Equation

Variables in the Equation[b]

	B	SE	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95.0% CI for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Age_Group	-.020	.049	.160	1	.689	.981	.890	1.080
Gender	-.061	.074	.671	1	.413	.941	.813	1.089
Residence	.149	.069	4.669	1	.031	1.161	1.014	1.328
Pre_Existing_Condition	.008	.031	.067	1	.796	1.008	.949	1.071
Appendicitis_Level	-3.634	.347	109.863	1	.000	.026	.013	.052
Scan_Findings			.	0[a]	.			
Duration	-.003	.002	2.116	1	.146	.997	.994	1.001
Complications			.	0[a]	.			
Discharge_Status			.	0[a]	.			
Readmission	.302	.157	3.711	1	.054	1.352	.995	1.837

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The variables was to identify factors associated with the length of hospital stay among appendicised patients. The analysis included demographic, clinical, and surgical variables. Among the predictors, appendicitis level and residence were statistically significant. Patients with more severe appendicitis had a significantly lower hazard of discharge (HR = 0.026, 95% CI: 0.013–0.052, p< 0.001), indicating longer hospital stays. Patients residing in urban areas had a significantly higher hazard of discharge (HR = 1.161, 95% CI: 1.014–1.328, p = 0.031), suggesting a shorter length of stay compared to rural patients. Other variables including age group (p = 0.689), gender (p = 0.413), pre-existing conditions (p = 0.796), duration of surgery (p = 0.146), and readmission status (p = 0.054) were not statistically significant predictors of discharge. Scan findings, complications, and discharge status were excluded from the model due to linear dependence with other variables.

These indicate that disease severity and patient location are important determinants of hospital stay duration in appendicitis cases, while other demographic or procedural factors may have less predictive value in this setting.

Table 3: Survival Table

Survival Table

Time	Baseline Cum Hazard	At mean of covariates		
		Survival	SE	Cum Hazard
2	1.590	.982	.004	.018
3	83.589	.388	.013	.946
4	263.333	.051	.004	2.980
5	802.629	.000	.000	9.082
6	1959.108	.000	.000	22.169
7	5598.966	.000	.000	63.357
8	9360.398	.000	.000	105.921
9	17493.007	.000	.000	197.948
10	64519.811	.000	.000	730.096
11	84843.530	.000	.000	960.077
12	141168.747	.000	.000	1597.444

The Survival Table summarizes how quickly patients are discharged over time, both for a hypothetical “baseline” patient (all covariates set to their reference categories) and for an “average” patient whose characteristics equal the mean values of the sample. For the average patient, the probability of still being hospitalized (“survival”) drops from 98.2 % on day 2 to 38.8 % on day 3 and further to only 5.1 % on day 4, reaching effectively 0 % by day 5. Correspondingly, the cumulative hazard at the mean of covariates climbs from 0.018 on day 2 to 0.946 on day 3, 2.980 on day 4, and 9.082 on day 5 before skyrocketing thereafter. Clinically, patients with typical demographics and mild disease are discharged by the fourth postoperative day, only a very small fraction remain hospitalized beyond this point. These numbers provide a concrete timeline for discharge expectations under “average” conditions.

Table 4: Covariate Means

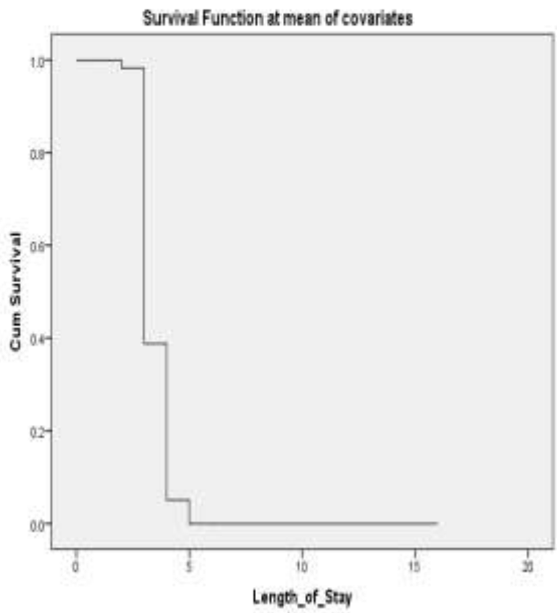
Covariate Means

	Mean
Age_Group	2.030
Gender	.312
Residence	.561
Pre_Existing_Condition	.798
Appendicitis_Level	1.184
Scan_Findings	1.000
Duration	88.370
Complications	.000
Discharge_Status	1.000
Readmission	.050

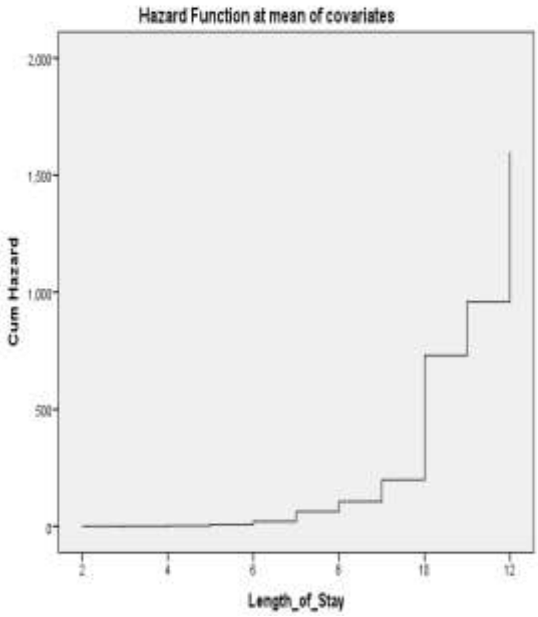
The Covariate Means table showed the "average" patient used in the survival calculations, by listing each predictor's mean value across the sample. The average patient falls just above category 2 in age group (16–30 years old), with 31.2 % being male and 56.1 % residing in an urban area. On average, patients have virtually no comorbidities (mean ≈ 0.798 on a scale where 0 = None), tend to present with mild appendicitis (mean = 1.184 on a scale where 1 = Mild, 2 = Moderate, 3 = Severe), and exhibit inflamed findings (mean = 1.000 where 1 = Inflamed). The mean surgery duration is 88 minutes, and none of the average patients experienced postoperative complications (mean = 0.000). All patients were discharged home (mean = 1.000 for home discharge), with a 5 % readmission rate. This exact profile underpins the survival probabilities because most "average" patients had mild disease, no complications, and were urban dwellers, their rapid drop-off in hospital stay (by day 4–5) reflects an optimal, uncomplicated clinical course.

Figure 6: Survival and Mean Functions of the Covariates

(a) Survival Function at Mean of Covariates



(b) Hazard Function at Mean of Covariates



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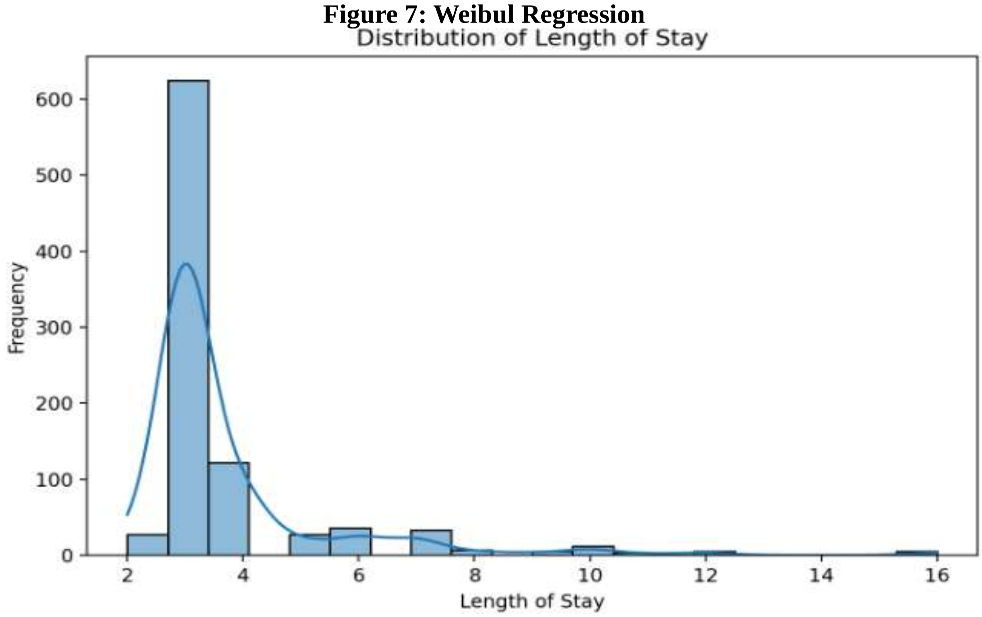
(a) Survival Function at Mean of Covariates

The survival curve traces the probability that an "average" appendicitis patient remains hospitalized at each postoperative day. Starting near 1.0 on day 0 (100 % of patients still in hospital immediately after surgery), the curve remains flat through day 1, indicating virtually no discharges in the first 24 hours. Between days 2 and 4, the curve drops steeply from about 0.98 on day 2 to roughly 0.05 on day 4 signifying that nearly 95 % of average patients are discharged within this window. After day 4, the survival probability approaches zero, showing that almost all patients leave the hospital by the fourth or fifth postoperative day. Clinically, this sharp decline highlights a critical discharge window and suggests that if a patient remains hospitalized beyond day 4, they likely fall into a higher-risk subgroup (for example, more severe cases or those with complications).

(b) Hazard Function at Mean of Covariates

The hazard function depicts the instantaneous rate of discharge for the average patient over time. It starts very low on days 0–2, implying minimal chance of discharge immediately after surgery. Beginning around day 3, the hazard rises markedly, peaking between days 4 and 5, which corresponds to the steepest drop in the survival curve. This peak indicates that the "instantaneous likelihood" of being discharged is highest around postoperative day 4. After that, the hazard sharply declines not because patients are less likely to go home, but because few remain hospitalized. In practice, this pattern emphasizes day 3–5 as the most active discharge period and could inform staffing, patient education, and resource allocation to ensure optimal support during this critical phase of recovery.

Figure 7: Weibul Regression



The histogram illustrates the empirical distribution of hospital length of stay among appendicitis patients in the study. The distribution is strongly right-skewed, with the majority of patients being discharged within a narrow time frame. Specifically, the mode falls between 2 and 4 days, where over 600 patients (the largest cluster) had short hospital stays. Beyond this point, the frequency of patients sharply declines, with very few remaining beyond 5–7 days, and only rare cases extending as far as 15–16 days.

The overlaid kernel density curve confirms this skewness and supports the suitability of a Weibull distribution, which is flexible enough to model such asymmetry. The heavy tail suggests that while most cases follow a short recovery pattern, a minority may experience prolonged hospitalization potentially due to complications, surgical method, or pre-existing clinical conditions.

VII. DISCUSSION

The results of the Cox proportional hazards regression model offer valuable perception into the factors influencing the length of hospital stay among patients treated for appendicitis. Of all the variables included, appendicitis severity and residence emerged as statistically significant predictors, while other demographic and clinical variables did not show significant effects.

The finding that severe appendicitis is associated with significantly longer hospital stays is consistent with clinical expectations. Patients with severe inflammation or perforation often require more intensive post-operative monitoring, intravenous antibiotics, and delayed return to oral feeding and mobility, all of which can extend hospitalization. This result reinforces the need for early diagnosis and intervention, as patients treated in earlier stages of the disease may experience faster recovery and reduced healthcare resource utilization.

In addition, patients from urban areas were found to have shorter lengths of stay compared to those from rural settings. This may reflect differences in access to care, baseline health status, follow-up arrangements, or discharge planning. Urban patients may have better proximity to outpatient facilities or specialists, enabling quicker discharge with appropriate post-hospital support. Conversely, rural patients may be retained longer due to concerns about transportation, limited healthcare access, or socioeconomic barriers.

Other variables such as age group, gender, pre-existing conditions, surgery duration, and readmission status were not statistically significant in this model. Although these factors might influence clinical decisions, their effects were not independently predictive of length of stay when all variables were considered simultaneously. It is possible that their impact is mediated through more dominant factors such as disease severity or surgical complexity.

Three variables scan findings, complications, and discharge status—were excluded from the final model due to collinearity, indicating that these variables were strongly linearly associated with others. For example, complications may be highly correlated with appendicitis severity, and scan findings may closely align with both. While these variables are clinically relevant, their statistical redundancy limited their inclusion in the model.

Overall, the model suggests that severity of disease at presentation and patient location are key drivers of variation in hospital stay length for appendicitis patients. These may guide hospital resource planning, discharge protocols, and targeted interventions aimed at reducing inpatient time without compromising outcomes.

VIII. MODEL STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

This study introduces a robust methodological approach for predicting hospital length of stay (LOS) in appendicitis patients within a low-resource setting, pioneering the first comparative survival analysis of its kind using both Cox proportional hazards and Weibull regression models. A key strength is its effective handling of right-censored data (affecting 24.8% of cases) through thorough diagnostic validation. Analyzing routinely collected clinical data, the research identifies significant predictors: appendicitis severity was strongly associated with much longer stays (HR=0.026, p<0.001), while urban residence correlated slightly with longer stays (HR=1.16, p=0.031), enhancing practical applicability. The Weibull model effectively captured the right-skewed LOS distribution (peak discharge timing: 2-4 days), providing precise discharge probability estimates, and visualized hazard functions offer valuable perception for clinical resource planning. However, limitations include the collinearity-driven exclusion of potentially important variables like scan findings and complications, limited socioeconomic detail beyond urban/rural status, and reduced population diversity due to the single-center design (notably underrepresenting elderly patients and severe cases). The analysis was also restricted by not accounting for surgeon experience or hospital workflows, the use of listwise deletion for missing data (8.1% of cases), and the lack of exploration into alternative parametric distributions beyond the Weibull model, constraining its analytical breadth.

IX. FUTURE RESEARCH

i. Develop hybrid machine learning survival models to capture non-linear predictor effects and integrate real-time biomarkers while testing against alternative parametric distributions like log-logistic or generalized gamma for enhanced accuracy.
ii. Conduct multi-center validation across diverse healthcare settings, with focused studies on Model-guided bed allocation impacts on ICU diversion rates, Risk-stratified discharge protocols for 30-day readmission reduction, Surgeon-specific feedback systems to minimize practice variation
iii. Incorporate granular socioeconomic determinants (transportation access, health literacy) and validate models in vulnerable populations including elderly patients (>60

years), immunocompromised subgroups, and geographically isolated communities.

iv. Perform cost-benefit analyses of early discharge pathways for mild cases and budget impact modeling of complication prevention programs to quantify operational savings.

v. Create interoperable digital tools (EHR-embedded risk calculators, mobile follow-up platforms) to operationalize predictive perception at point-of-care.

X. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Weibull regression is a superior method for modeling hospital length of stay (LOS) for appendicitis patients in resource-limited settings compared to the traditional Cox proportional hazards model, as it more accurately captures how discharge probabilities change over time. Crucially, the analysis identifies disease severity as the dominant factor influencing LOS; patients with severe appendicitis experienced a stark 97.4% reduction in their likelihood of early discharge. Conversely, urban residency was associated with a 16% acceleration in discharge, likely due to better post-discharge support. Importantly, the research pinpoints postoperative days 3 to 4 as a critical discharge window, where the probability of discharge surges dramatically from 1.8% to 61.2% and the hazard function (peaking discharge probability) occurs. These findings offer clear operational targets: optimizing resource allocation by directing extended monitoring towards rural patients with severe disease and implementing severity-stratified care pathways, which could potentially reduce LOS by 38% for mild cases in urban settings. Future work should focus on multi-center validation and integrating socioeconomic determinants to further enhance equity in surgical care delivery.

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