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Retrospective analysis of pediatric trauma cases at a tertiary care center in southern India

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Background: Trauma is one of the major causes of morbidity and mortality in children. In this era of rapid growth and urbanization, child safety at home and on roads is getting jeopardized. Under 14 year, incidence of childhood injuries are on the rise in India and it needs urgent application of preventive policies to ensure safety in childhood. We present our analysis on childhood injuries at a tertiary care centre in south India, and compare our results with available series.

Objective: To evaluate the pattern of pediatric trauma cases and their subsequent morbidity and mortality.

Methods: Retrospective review of all cases (less than 12 years) referred to pediatric surgery unit of a teaching hospital over a period of 26 months (October 2011-November 2013). Burns, isolated head injury, ophthalmic injuries, and orthopedic injuries were excluded. The following parameters were assessed: Age group, sex, mode of trauma, and type of injury, place where the trauma occurred, time interval between injury and presentation and the overall morbidity as well as mortality.

Results: A total of 218 cases of trauma were assessed and 24 cases, in which the details were incomplete, were excluded. Maximum number of cases (n= 84) involved the children in school going age. Male to female ratio was 2.3:1. Majority of the cases (74%) were trivial trauma. Road (36.5%), home (35%) and school/playground (28.3%) were almost equally unsafe in our series. The median time interval in presentation was 3 hours (Range 30 min- 7 days). In lieu with present management protocol, majority of patients were managed conservatively and 14 cases (7.2%) required operative intervention. Among them none had any major complications till last follow up. There was no mortality in the series.

Limitations: The study is based on hospital data and hence the injury patterns and results cannot be generalized to the entire community.

Conclusion: Preventive strategies are needed to make our roads and home safe for children, through better coordinated political and social efforts by means of execution / enforcement of legislation.

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