

Injuries Related to Falls: An Audit on Trauma Victims Admitted to Teaching Hospital, Peradeniya

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Falls are a leading cause of injury-related morbidity and mortality in Sri Lanka. However, only little is known about the details on context and characteristics of such falls. The aim of this study was to describe the characteristics of fall related injuries in patients admitted to Teaching hospital, Peradeniya.

Recording of trauma data is done using a questionnaire developed based on WHO injury surveillance guidelines and constitutes part of the prospective data base maintained by the surgical unit. Data is entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and analysed using Minitab.

Out of a total of 870 patients admitted to the surgical unit during May 2010 to August 2011, due to trauma, falls were the leading cause (382, 43%) and 56% of falls were in males. More than one third (38.2%) of the injuries due to falls were reported in the age group of 0-14 years and of them two thirds were boys. Females were the majority (63%) in the > 55 year age group.

Falls from the same level of the standing position were more common (67.2%) than falls from a height (21.4%). The home environment (84%) was the commonest place where the injury took place. In the age group above 18 years, 12 (5.6%) patients were under the influence of alcohol. All of these patients were males. With regard to the pattern of injuries, most patients 347 (89.7%) had injuries to a single area of the body. Majority of the patients (85.7%) had minor or moderate injuries based on Abbreviated Injury Scale. According the Glasgow Outcome Scale, predicted outcome at discharge was good in most patients (95%).

This study describes the context and characteristics of fall related injuries presenting to a tertiary care hospital of Sri Lanka. It also demonstrates some epidemiological factors such as extremes of age and the use of alcohol which are causative associations. This epidemiological as well as clinical information provides us with insight to plan the management of such injuries and will also guide future funding of public health programs, particularly to develop preventive strategies.