

## **PREVALENCE OF INJURIES AMONG UNDER 5 YEARS OLD CHILDREN IN A SELECTED COMMUNITY IN SRI LANKA**

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Traumatic injuries are a major cause of morbidity and mortality amongst children throughout the world. Sri Lanka is no exception and the community prevalence of traumatic injuries amongst children here is unknown. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to find the community prevalence of injuries amongst children under 5 years of age in a selected community in Sri Lanka.

This was a community based descriptive, cross sectional study covering a randomly selected area of the Homagama Medical officer of Health division in the Colombo District. The population was children under 5 years who were permanent residents of that area for the past six months and a single child under the age of 5 years was randomly selected from each household. A structured, pre-tested, interviewer administered questionnaire with trained interviewers, was used for data collection, over a period of 3 months period. Pictorial guide was included to identify the injury types.

Of the sample of 2136 respondents, 602 (28.19%) had a history of injuries, and of them 91.69% had had an injury during the past 1 year. Of the 1077 (50.42%) male children, 28% have had injuries, while 27% of females too had injuries. Children between 2 to 4 years were mainly vulnerable for injuries, while 35.3% of children have reported only one significant (as perceived by parents/guardians) injury during the past year and 33.9% have had at least 3 significant injuries within the past one year. Most common injury types were abrasions (43.7%), followed by lacerations (18.3%) and contusions (9.5%). Of those reporting injuries, 2.35% had suffered fractures. Most of the causes for these injuries were falls (74.0%), followed by falling objects, animal attacks and burns. 67.9% of injuries had occurred at home while 16.8% had occurred in the home garden. 4.9% were road injuries.

It was seen that the incidence of injuries were almost similar amongst boys and girls, however in international studies boys had a higher incidence than girls. The most common injury types reported here were abrasions and lacerations, followed by head injuries and burns, but globally, the commonest were short term head injuries and open wounds, followed by burns. The common mechanisms of injuries in our study were falls and falling objects, followed by animal attacks which were comparable to foreign studies. However, road traffic injuries were less common in this study. Similar to previous findings, this study too revealed that home injuries were the commonest among preschool children. Thus, the community prevalence of injuries amongst the under 5 years old children of this population was found to be 28.19 per 100 children of that age group.