

Epidemiology of paediatric injuries in Nepal: evidence from emergency department injury surveillance

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Abstract

Background

Globally, injuries cause >5 million deaths annually and children and young people are particularly vulnerable. Injuries are the leading cause of death in people aged 5–24 years and a leading cause of disability. In most low-income and middle-income countries where the majority of global child injury burden occurs, systems for routinely collecting injury data are limited.

Methods

A new model of injury surveillance for use in emergency departments in Nepal was designed and piloted. Data from patients presenting with injuries were collected prospectively over 12 months and used to describe the epidemiology of paediatric injury presentations.

Results

The total number of children <18 years of age presenting with injury was 2696, representing 27% of all patients presenting with injuries enrolled. Most injuries in children presenting to the emergency departments in this study were unintentional and over half of children were <10 years of age. Falls, animal bites/stings and road traffic injuries accounted for nearly 75% of all injuries with poisonings, burns and drownings presenting proportionately less often. Over half of injuries were cuts, bites and open wounds. In-hospital child mortality from injury was 1%.

Conclusion

Injuries affecting children in Nepal represent a significant burden. The data on injuries observed from falls, road traffic injuries and injuries related to animals suggest potential areas for injury prevention. This is the biggest prospective injury surveillance study in Nepal in recent years and supports the case for using injury surveillance to monitor child morbidity and mortality through improved data.

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