

OP09. Pattern of injuries following falls from height at Accident & Emergency Unit, Colombo South Teaching Hospital

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Introduction

Falls from height is an important cause of death and disability in Sri Lanka.

Methods

A prospective study was done at CSTH for two months from November 2019. All patients admitted following falls from height were studied after consent and ethical clearance. An interviewer administered questionnaire was used. SPSS was used for data analysis.

Results

103 patients were included. 94(91.3%) were males and 9(8.7%) females. Highest numbers were seen in the age group 19 - 40 years, comprising 40.8% of total patients (n=42). The 41 - 60 age group had the second highest number of patients (35.9%, n=37).

35% (n=36) of patients were labourers while 21.4% (n=22) were masons. Falls commonly occurred (44.1%) between 12.01pm – 6pm. Only 15 patients (14.6%) were found to be under the influence of alcohol. 53 patients (51.5%) met accidents while climbing on the roof or slab. 27 (26.2%) fell off ladders and 5 patients fell off trees. Majority (68.9%) fell on the cement/concrete floor. Only one patient wore protective equipment. 70.9% of the victims (n=73) were transported by private vehicle and others by ambulance.

Injuries occurred in the limbs (46.6%), head and neck (30.1%), Abdomen (16.5%). 55.3% of the patients were discharged within 24 hours. 38.8% were taken under orthopaedic care. 5 patients (4.9%) transferred to NHSL. Only single death occurred during this study due to head impact.

Conclusion

Most of the injuries were preventable. Public awareness should be created on safety measures such as helmets and safety belts. Legal system needs to be very strict on labour safety laws.

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