

ABSTRACT

Title:

Incidence, economic impact, medical consequences and perception of Unintentional Childhood injuries in a rural block of South India.

Context:

Globally, about 8, 75,000 children die every year due to unintentional injury and more than 1000 children's lives everyday could be saved by implementing proven interventions. Experts estimate that up to 90% of childhood injuries are considered both predictable and preventable. However, many among the general public believes that injuries are "accidents" or "acts of fate". Changing people's perceptions and beliefs about the nature of childhood injuries play a vital role in injury prevention.

Objective:

This study aimed to estimate the incidence of injury and to assess the economic impact and medical consequences following an injury. The secondary objective was to assess the perception of mothers regarding risks and hazards of unintentional injuries.

Setting and Methodology:

A non-concurrent cohort study was conducted in 13 clusters of Kaniyambadi block of Vellore district in Tamil Nadu. 1600 Children were screened and a detailed questionnaire was administered to those who sustained injury to obtain information on the consequences and impact after an injury. Mothers with 1-5 years aged children were chosen by Simple Random Sampling for a Cross sectional survey and Perception was assessed by a validated tool. Focus group discussions were also conducted.

Results & Conclusions:

The injury related morbidity in the study was 292.5/1000/year among children between 0-14 years. Boys (4.5%) had a higher rate of injury than girls. Age group between 10-14 years had a higher number of injuries (4.6%). The commonest place of injury was home (44.8%) and the most common anatomical site of injury was lower extremity (51.7%). Falls (43.1%) was the most common cause of injury followed by Road traffic injuries (27.6%). The direct medical and non medical cost of treatment after an injury was from approximately 10 INR to approximately 50,000 INR. Half of the children missed school after an injury. Mothers had poor perceptions injury from hazards like cribs, small toys and plastic bags. Literacy was found to be the significant predictor for perception of hazard and there were no significant predictors for perception of risk. This study recommends stringent laws for hazard free environment health education to primary caregivers of Children.

Key words: *Unintentional childhood injuries, Perception, prevention*