

Snake Envenomation: 5 Years Experience in a Referral Hospital

In a prospective study conducted from January 1989 to December 1993, we documented some differing observations in comparison to earlier experience. Of the 115 cases of snake bite studied, 60 had varying degrees of envenomation; the frequency of envenomation being greater than other studies(1,2). Of the 60 cases with envenomation, 53 cases (88%) were Viperine envenomation. Krait and Cobra

(Table I). Eleven among the referred cases had inadequate anti snake venom (ASV) and recovered with further doses of ASV. Five cases of renal failure and 2 cases of shock recovered with fluid therapy alone. Contrary to the direction given in the manufacturer's leaf let, the dosage of ASV had to be individualized and timely and proper hydration were as important factors as specific therapy.

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TABLE I- Complications and Mortality.

Complications/ Mortality	Direct (n=32)	Referred (n=28)	Total (n=60)
Acute renal failure	4 (13)	16 (57)	20 (33)
Respiratory paralysis	1 (3)	1 (4)	2 (3)
Shock	1 (3)	11 (39)	12 (20)
Death	3 (9)	13 (46)	16 (27)

Figures in parentheses represent percentages of the sample size (n) in that group.

bites were rare in contrast to other reports(3).

Six children who received specific treatment within 1 hour after bite irrespective of age and severity completely recovered. The complications and mortality were directly proportional to the hours of delay in specific treatment. Of the 60 cases with envenomation, 32 were direct admissions and 28 were referred from other hospitals. The complications and mortality were higher in referred cases

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