ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the aetiology, biomechanics and demographics of patients with fractures of the midface.

Materials and Methods: Patients with midface fractures (who consented to participate in the study) who presented to the Division of Maxillofacial and Oral Surgery over a 12 month period from December 2005 to December 2006 were included in the study. Data was recorded on age, race, gender, date and cause of injury, associated injuries and use of alcohol at the time of injury. The fractures were grouped into Le Fort, zygomatico-maxillary, dentoalveolar and panfacial fractures.

Results: The sample comprised 94 patients; 78 (82.98%) males and 16 (17.02%) females with an age range of 3 to 67 years. Blacks accounted for 77.66% of the total sample, followed by Whites (12.77%), Coloureds (6.38%) and Asians (3.19%). Blunt trauma due to interpersonal violence, motor vehicle accidents, gun shot wounds and falls contributed to 40.5%, 26.6%, 13.8% and 5.3% of the fractures respectively. Le Fort fractures were less commonly observed than zygomaticomaxillary complex midface fractures.

Conclusion: A relationship exists between facial trauma, poverty and alcohol consumption. Blunt trauma due to interpersonal violence is the most common cause of midface injuries. Majority of injuries are sustained during weekends. Zygomaticomaxillary complex fractures are the most common midface fractures.