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Traumatic brain injuries at Vryheid Hospital during 2009

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ABSTRACT

1. BACKGROUND AND SETTING

The study was conducted at Vryheid district hospital in the Kwazulu- Natal province.

The increasing number of traumatic brain injuries seen at the hospital has prompted me to describe traumatic brain injuries in the community.

Data was collected from the records of casualty department and the hospital wards.

2. AIM

This thesis describes traumatic brain injuries at Vryheid district hospital during 2009.

3. METHODS

It is a retrospective cohort study with a total sample size of 596 participants; retrieved from patients' registers at the hospital's casualty department and hospital wards.

4. RESULTS

- The peak age of occurrence of traumatic brain injuries (TBI) at Vryheid is between 20 and 30 years with 75% of injuries happening in younger than 35 years and a mean age of 29 years.

- 78% of traumatic brain injuries occurred in female patients but it is important to note that females are in greater number than males at Abaqulusi municipality.

- Blacks are the most affected by the traumatic brain injuries at Vryheid: 97% versus 2.4% in white and 0.3 in Asians.

- Blunt traumatic brain injuries are the most common type of TBI at Vryheid: 97%.

- Assault injuries constitute the major cause of traumatic brain injuries (57 %) followed by motor vehicle accidents (40%)

- Mild traumatic brain injuries represent 75% of traumatic brain injuries presenting at Vryheid during 2009.

- The majority of TBI patients at Vryheid were discharged either from casualty department or from the wards and only as small number of patients died or was transferred out. Moreover, 60% of patients were treated as ambulatory patients.

- 94% of TBI at Vryheid hospital had a good prognosis and only a small percentage was associated with bad prognosis.

- The mean hospital length stay at Vryheid was 2.2 days with a minimum of less than a day (62%) and a maximum of 129 days.

5. CONCLUSION

In 2009, traumatic brain injuries were found to be common at Vryheid hospital in the black population and were mainly due to assault injuries and motor vehicle accidents. Moreover, motor vehicle accidents were associated with high mortality.

Although, the majority of traumatic brain injuries at Vryheid hospital were mild, 10% were severe. Thus, TBI at Vryheid constitutes a public health concern that needs to be addressed by the SA government in consultation and collaboration with various stakeholders.