Determination of the Aetiological Pattern of Head Injury in the Region

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Abstract: Introduction: Earlier studies from the developing countries as well as from other terrains of Bangladesh showed various aetiologies of head injuries. However, there is no substantive government data’s are available regarding the cause and manner of head injury. Objective: The current study was conducted with an objective to determine the aetiological pattern of head injury in the region.

Materials & Methods: The study was conducted in Dept. of forensic medicine, Ashiyen Medical College, Dhaka, Bangladesh from June-2019 to July-2021. Cases of fatal head injuries irrespective of their aetiology that were brought for medico-legal autopsies over a period of two years were included in this study. The data with regard to their age, sex, mode of injury in detail was collected and interpreted.

Results: Out of total 59 cases of fatal head injury who succumbs to death, 90% were males. Maximum numbers of cases (27.11%) were in age group of 21-30 followed by 31-40 year (22.03%). Roadside accident was the leading cause of head injury (65%) while only 15% were as a result of assault. Two wheeler riders comprises of 35.31% followed by pedestrians (24.3%). Maximum number of fatalities due to head injury was due to roadside accident and that too in a productive age group of 21-40 years. Rider two wheelers and pedestrian were involved in majority.

Conclusion: To minimize the morbidity and mortality resulting from head injury consequent to road accidents there is a need for better maintenance of roads, strict enforcement of traffic rules, compulsory wearing of crash helmets by two wheelers along with imparting of compulsory road safety education to school children from primary education level.

Keywords: Aetiology, Head Injury, Medico legal, Autopsy.

INTRODUCTION

Head injury is defined by the national advisory neurological diseases and stroke council as “a morbid state resulting from gross or subtle structural changes in the scalp, skull and/or the contents of the skull, produced by the mechanical forces” [1]. Head is one of the most accessible and vital part of the body that is why frequently involved in unintentional (accidents) and intentional (physical assault) trauma. Even a single blow to head can be fatal, taking as an example of recent time where tragic death of sports person by unintentional blow to head has shocked the whole world. Head injuries are the most dreadful trauma in terms of morbidity and mortality. They are often caused by road traffic accidents, assaults, falls, industrial and domestic accidents, sports accidents etc. [2]. Nine percent of global mortality is due to injuries, which causes about five million deaths every year worldwide [3]. Vehicular accidents accounts for nearly fifty percent of injuries and at least 40% of deaths results from head injury, a percentage that is increasing day by day [4]. Surge in motorization, expansion in the road network and the rising population in the country contribute toward the growing numbers of road accidents. During the decade 2001 to 2011, the road network in Bangladesh have increased at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.4%, the numbers of registered motor vehicles in the country have amplified at a compound annual growth rate of 9.9% while the country’s population have increased at CAGR of 1.6%. The number of road accidents in the country increased at a CAGR of 2.1% during the same period and the fatalities due to road accident increased by 5.8% [5]. Earlier studies from the developing countries as well as
from other terrains of Bangladesh showed various aetiologies of head injuries, which includes trauma, vehicular accidents, pedestrian injuries, fall from height etc. However, there is no substantive government datas are available regarding the cause and manner of head injury. Therefore, the study was conducted to determine the various aetiological patterns of fatal head injuries in the region.

**MATERIAL & METHODS**

This prospective study was planned and conducted in The study was conducted in Dept. of forensic medicine, Ashiyan Medical College, Dhaka, Bangladesh from June-2019 to July-2021. All the cases of fatal head injuries irrespective of their aetiology that were brought for medico legal autopsies were included in this study. All the cases were admitted and primarily treated for head injury. The data with regard to their age, sex, mode of injury in detail was collected from inquest papers/ police proceedings and first information report of the police (FIR). A semi-structured questionnaire served as study tool. All the questionnaires were manually checked and edited for completeness and were then coded for computer entry. After compilation of collected data, analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20 (IBM, Chicago, USA). The results were expressed using appropriate statistical methods. When the data follow a normal distribution then it was presented in mean ± SD, otherwise median ± IQR (Inter Quartile Range) was applied.

**RESULTS**

Of the 59 cases of head injuries, which were brought for medico legal autopsy, 90% were males and only 10% were females. The age ranges from 5 years to 80 years with mean 37.53 and standard deviation of 17.616, median was found to be 33.5 with standard error of mean 2.274 (Table 1). Roadside accident was the most common cause of head injury (65%), followed by the injury sustained due to assault (15%). Head injury as a result from fall from height seen only in two cases while railway accident was the genesis in 5 cases. Miscellaneous cause such as fall from stairs or fall of heavy object over the head comprises of 11% of total cases (Figure 1).

![Fig-1: Mode of injury.](image)

**Table 1: Age and sex distribution of study subjects.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in years</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;10 years</td>
<td>02 (3.77%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>02 (3.39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 years</td>
<td>07 (13.2%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>07 (11.86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td>14 (26.41%)</td>
<td>02 (33.33%)</td>
<td>16 (27.11 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>11 (20.75%)</td>
<td>02 (33.33%)</td>
<td>13 (22.03 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 years</td>
<td>08 (15.09%)</td>
<td>01 (16.67%)</td>
<td>09 (15.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 years</td>
<td>05 (9.43%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>05 (8.47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70 years</td>
<td>04 (7.55%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>04 (6.77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;71 years</td>
<td>02 (3.77%)</td>
<td>01 (16.67%)</td>
<td>03 (5.08%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53 (100%)</td>
<td>06 (100%)</td>
<td>59 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two wheelers were involved in majority of roadside accidents (37.83%) of which 35.13% were the rider. 24.3% of cases were pedestrians and 29.72% were occupants of four wheeler. None of the two wheeler occupants were wearing helmets. Similiary, no seal belt was in use by the driver or passenger of four wheeler at the time of accident.

**DISCUSSION**

Males being more involved in outdoor activities therefore exhibit preponderance over females in terms of incidence of head injury. 90% males were involved in head injuries as compared to 10% females. Goyal et al., also observed more involvement of males (87.7%) in head injuries in their study [8]. Male to female ratio was observed to be 4.2:1 by Kumar et al.,
INTRODUCTION

In the busy world of today, road traffic accidents have become a serious menace. Our observation from a study conducted in our institute from 2008-2010 shows that maximum number of road traffic related injuries were due to RTA. The study was prospective in nature over a period of three years. In our study, the overall trend of incidence of road traffic accidents was increasing. The next major group of victims was the pedestrian. The maximum number of fatalities due to head injury in medicolegal autopsies has not been much investigated in this region. Very few similar studies are available in the literature. Findings of this study may assist in planning preventive aspects of road traffic accidents which is a very important aspect now days. The study has some limitations as well. First, some may argue that findings of this study may not be generalised. I agree because such aetiological pattern tends to vary from place to place. Second, sample size of this study is small. Data of sixty subjects was analysed in this study. Studies with bigger sample size are warranted.

CONCLUSION

Maximum number of fatalities due to head injury was subsequent to roadside accident and that too in a productive age group of 21-40 years. Rider two wheelers and pedestrian were involved in majority. To minimize the morbidity and mortality resulting from head injury consequent to road accidents there is a need for better maintenance of roads, strict enforcement of traffic rules, compulsory wearing of crash helmets by two wheelers and shoulder belt in cars along with imparting of compulsory road safety education right from primary education level. Injury surveillance and trauma registry should be done at every hospital so that preventive strategies can be formulated.

REFERENCES

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