

Introduction

Trauma is defined as the physical injury resulting from transfer of energy to the body (*Davis AC, 1991*).

Trauma may be blunt or penetrating. Blunt trauma, occurs in motor vehicle accidents, falls and blows. The injury results from combination of crushing, stretching, deforming and sheering forces. The magnitude is related to the mass of the object involved, their rate of acceleration and deceleration and relative direction of the impact (*Canizaro PC,1990*).

Blunt abdominal trauma is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality among all age groups. Identification of serious intra-abdominal pathology often is challenging. Many injuries may not manifest during the initial assessment and treatment period. Mechanisms of injury often result in other associated injuries that may divert the physician's attention from potentially life-threatening intra-abdominal pathology (*Salomone JA, 2001*).

Frequency:

In the United States: By nearly every measure, injury ranks as one of this nation's most pressing health issues. More than 150,000 people die each year as a result of injuries from causes such as motor vehicle crashes, fires, falls, drowning, poisoning, suicide, and homicide. Injuries are the leading cause of death and disability for US children and young adults.

According to the 2000 statistics from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, trauma (unintentional and intentional) was the leading cause of death in persons aged 1-44 years. Further review of the data reveals that in those aged 15-25 years, 14,113 persons died from unintentional injuries, 73% of which were related to vehicular trauma. In individuals aged 25-34 years, 57% of the 11,769 deaths reported were from motor vehicle collisions.

In 2001, approximately 30 million people visited emergency departments (EDs) for the treatment of nonfatal injuries and more than 72,000 people were disabled by injuries. Injury imposes exceptional costs, both in health care dollars and in human losses, to society.

Internationally: In 1990, approximately 5 million people died worldwide as a result of injury. The risk of death from injury varied strongly by region, age, and sex. Approximately two male deaths due to violence were reported for every female death. Injuries accounted for approximately 12.5% of all male deaths, compared with 7.4% of female deaths (*Udeani j, 2004*).

Globally, injury accounts for 10% of all deaths; however, injuries in sub-Saharan Africa are far more destructive than in other areas. In sub-Saharan Africa, the risk of death from trauma is highest in those aged 15-60 years, and the proportion of such deaths from trauma is higher than in any other region of the world. In South Africa, for instance, the traffic death rate per unit of distance traveled is only surpassed by Korea, Kenya, and Morocco. Estimates indicate that by 2020, 8.4 million people will die yearly from injury, and injuries from traffic collisions will be the third most common cause of disability worldwide and the second most common cause in the developing world (*Udeani J, 2004*).

In Egypt, Mashaly in 1993 found that trauma is a significant cause of morbidity and mortality. It accounts at least one quarter of all patient visits and hospital admissions. In 1989, it represented the fifth leading cause of death. Even children who survived childhood diseases such as diarrheal disease, and vaccination preventable diseases, one of every five of these children died from injury. Among children 1 – 5 years old, injuries account for 19.5 % of all deaths. Over half of children deaths between ages of 15 – 18 years old are resulting from injuries.
