

Pattern and clinical characteristics of firearm injuries.

[Odhiambo WA](#), [Guthua SW](#), [Chindia ML](#), [Macigo FG](#).

Abstract

OBJECTIVE:

To determine the pattern and characteristics of patients admitted with firearm injuries (FAIs) and establish the morbidity and mortality associated with these injuries.

DESIGN:

Retrospective cross-sectional study.

SETTING:

Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), January 2004 to December 2005.

SUBJECTS:

All patients admitted with physically evident firearm injury.

RESULTS:

There were a total of 717 patients recorded with FAIs constituting 0.6% of the total number of patients seen in the casualty. Of these, 421 (58.7%) were admitted and treated as in-patients. A firearm was used in 6.7% of the 6300 assault cases recorded in 2004 and in 9.7% of the 3079 cases recorded in 2005. The increase from 6.7% in 2004 to 9.7% in 2005 was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). There were 370 (87.9%) males and 49 (11.6%) females giving a male to female ratio of 7.5:1. The mean age was 29.7 +/- 10.9 years with a range of 3 to 66 years. At least 262 (62.2%) of the 421 admitted FAI casualties were treated under general anaesthesia (GA). The average duration of operation per patient was 2 +/- 1.5 hours.

CONCLUSION:

FAIs are on the increase and affect all age groups but is largely a disease of a young male adult in the 3rd and 4th decade of life. Mortality is higher with increasing age while female victims are fewer but on average six years younger than males. The lower extremities are the commonest target among the survivors. However, abdominal wounds tend to be the most lethal, accounting for greater mortality.