

Pattern of Limb Amputation Among Rural Kenyan Children and Adolescents

Abstract:

The causes of limb amputation among children differ between and within countries. These data are valuable in prevention and planning of rehabilitation strategies for the victims but are scarcely reported. The aim of this study was to investigate the causes of amputation in children and adolescents in rural Kenya. Records of patients aged 18 years and younger who underwent major limb amputation in PCEA Kikuyu and Tenwek Hospitals between January 1998 and December 2008 were analyzed retrospectively for cause and age. Data were analyzed by SPSS (version 11.50). Only complete records for age and confirmed diagnosis were included. Eighty-eight of 290 (30.3%) amputation cases were in individuals aged 2 weeks to 18 years. Trauma was the most common cause (42%), followed by congenital defects (29.5%), infection (12.5%), and tumors (11.4%). Of the trauma cases, burns were the most common cause (27%), followed by animal bites (18.9%), road traffic accidents (16.2%), and falls (13.5%). A total of 77.2% of the patients presented after the age of 5 years. The male:female ratio was 2:1. These data imply that more than 70% of amputations among rural Kenyan children result from preventable causes that may be related to poor socioeconomic status. Improvement of living standards, formulation of public health education, and planning for rehabilitation programs are recommended.