ABSTRACT

Background:
Burn injuries have a devastating economic and emotional toll on entire families, often resulting in loss of income and stigma as a result of disfigurement and disability. The study seeks to identify factors contributing to burn injuries and identify the best strategies to implement burn prevention programmes for maximum impact on high-risk populations.

Method:
A collaborative, cross-sectional quantitative and qualitative study was conducted in Kenya at Nakuru Provincial Hospital, Nakuru County, and Kenyatta National Hospital, Nairobi, between June and November 2012. Information was collected by two trained research assistants using structured questionnaires. Survey data captured was analysed using SPSS version 15.0 and qualitative in-depth interviews were analysed using standard qualitative methods.

Results:
Data was collected from 359 patients who were hospitalised with severe burn injuries. 54% patients were male and 46% were children below the age of 5 years. 76% of the patients’ households earned less than 2 USD per day. Almost three quarters (74%) of burns occurred at home and nearly 50% of the patients’ households used open fires and kerosene for cooking and lighting. Most of the injured children were either alone or without supervision during the incident. 92% of parents and caregivers were not aware of first aid measures to take after burn injuries.

Conclusions and Recommendations:
Most burn injuries occur when the children are alone or without supervision. Cook stoves and kerosene lamps are a hazard that children can access. Therefore we seek to provide affordable and easily accessible portable barriers around cooking areas as a measure to prevent burns in Kenya.