Scorpion stings in children

Sir,

I read with interest the recent article on scorpion stings at El-Quawayah General Hospital by Ismail. The author reported 48 cases from El-Quawah area, 20 of whom were children. He reported 10% mortality among children. It could be more interesting if the author would refer to our earlier report from the Northwestern region of Saudi Arabia. We reported 51 cases in children at Gurayat General Hospital during the period from January 1988 to December 1989. Four children died in our series giving the mortality rate of 4%. Previous reports from Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the middle east reported the incidence from 0% - 50%. Most of our cases were reported in the summer months. The report of Ismail was also carried out only during the summer months May to Oct. Had the study been carried out for a longer period to find out the seasonal incidence, it could be of interest from an epidemiological point. Hospital stay of our patients was similar to that of Ismail. Little has changed during the last five years, although managed care could change this figure if it was in this part of the world. Clinical presentation was similar to our report but all of our cases were children. It could be of interest if the clinical features were described according to different age groups. From earlier reports morbidity and mortality are higher among children. The study could give a better idea of abnormalities had the laboratory values been stated in numbers. Although the effectiveness of the scorpion antivenin has been in doubt, it is in use. Local application of ice or lidocaine, immobilization of extremities, alfa and beta adrenergic antagonists, nifedipine, angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors have been described as the various forms of treatment. Awareness of the problem and necessary preventive measures will help to decrease the morbidity and mortality, especially among children. I would like to thank Dr. Ismail for bringing back the issue into focus.

References


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