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Snake bite poisoning: A twelve years retrospective analysis of telephone calls reported to the National Poisons Information Centre, All India Institute of Medical Sciences

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Snake bite poisoning is a public health problem that takes a heavy toll of human lives in India. The exact incidence of morbidity and mortality is not available due to paucity of data. The present study was carried out to determine the incidence of snake bite envenomations reported to the National Poisons Information Centre, Department of Pharmacology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, during a period of twelve years (April 1999-March 2011). Analysis of the data showed a total of two hundred and ninety cases. Majority of bites were due to elapids (82.77%) followed by viperids (5.24%), non-poisonous species (2.62%) and unidentified snakes (9.36%) respectively. Most of the bites occurred during the months of July to September (56.89%). The age group involved was between 18-40 years with a high incidence in males (73.12 %). The bites were mainly reported in lower extremity (50.18%) followed by upper extremity (31.85%). Bites over the face, ear, neck, abdomen, eyebrows comprised 9.73%. There were few cases where bite area was not identified (8.23%). Anti snake venom was administered to all patients but the optimal dose, frequency of administration and duration of therapy was variable. Poor health services, difficult transportation, and delay in the anti snake venom administration especially in rural areas are the important factors responsible for high mortality. The study highlights that awareness about early medical interventions is mandatory. Morbidity and mortality may be reduced if the National Protocol on snake bite management formulated by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is followed by the health care facilities in the country.

Biography

Amita Srivastava, working as Poison Information Consultant in the National Poisons Information Centre of AIIMS has completed her PhD degree at the age of 29 years from Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, India. She has published a number of papers in national and international journals. She is a life member of Society of Toxicology, India and also the member of Indian Society of Toxicology. She is in the panel of reviewing committee of *Indian Journal of Pharmacology*. She has been co-guide of many PhD students of AIIMS. She has a rich experience of handling sophisticated laboratory instruments like Inductively Coupled Plasma and Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer.

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