EFFICACY OF THE HEPATITIS B VACCINE IN CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 12 AND 16 MONTHS IN MASHHAD HEALTH CENTERS, NORTH-EAST OF IRAN

More than 5% of the population are chronic carriers of hepatitis B virus (HBV). Hepatitis B and its complications are among major problems worldwide. Immunization is the best method for prophylaxis. This study was conducted to evaluate the efficacy of the HBV vaccine and to measure the titer of antibody against HBsAg after vaccination.

We collected serum samples from 100, 12 to 16-month-old infants who were vaccinated for three times (based on the recommendations of the Iranian Expanded Program on Immunization) during 1997. Serum samples were collected from individuals 3 – 6 months after the third vaccination and were tested for antibody against HBsAg using an ELISA technique.

Of 100 infants tested, 81 had antibody against HBsAg after immunization. These included 40 (42%) males and 41 (51%) females. The average titer of antibody production against HBsAg was 1,236 mIU/dL in males and 1,282 mIU/dL in females (overall: 1213 mIU/dL). The lower and the upper limit of antibody production was 100 and 1,600 mIU/dL, respectively. The lower and the upper limits were seen in 15-month-old infants. The efficacy of the HBV vaccine (Heberbiovac-Hb) in 12 to 16-month-old infants was therefore, 81%.

Our study revealed results far different from those mentioned in textbooks and indicated that a high percentage of infants do not respond appropriately after vaccination against HBV.

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PREVALENCE OF CUTANEOUS TUBERCULOSIS IN ZAHEDAN, SOUTH-EAST OF IRAN

Tuberculosis is an infectious disease. The pulmonary form of the disease is the most common type. Cutaneous tuberculosis is an extrapulmonary type of the disease which has been increasing during the last decade.

This retrospective study was conducted on a group of patients with cutaneous tuberculosis who were treated in Zahedan health centers. The medical records of the patients with tuberculosis were reviewed and the patients with cutaneous tuberculosis were selected and analyzed.

In this study, 1,740 patients were evaluated. Of these, 400 patients had extrapulmonary tuberculosis of whom 24 (6%) had cutaneous tuberculosis which had been treated. The disease was observed mostly among people aged 20 – 29 years. The disease was more common in females than males. The youngest patient was 5 years old and the oldest one was 48 years. The disease was more observed in patients with a history of BCG vaccination and was more frequent in Iranians than Afghans. All patients had the lupus vulgaris type and just one patient developed lupus vulgaris after BCG vaccination.

The incidence of cutaneous tuberculosis is higher in Zahedan than in other parts of Iran. In keeping with previous reports, the most common type of the disease was lupus vulgaris. To control and manage chronic cutaneous tuberculosis, it must be more carefully studied.

Authors: Banihashemi M, Salehi M.
EFFECT OF ACUPRESSURE ON DECREASED BREATHING PROBLEMS FROM CHEMICAL AGENTS

Great disability is reported in patients exposed to mustard gas. Subsequent respiratory involvement is shown in 84% of afflicted persons. These patients are often treated with expensive medications with many side effects. The present paper describes the noninvasive method of acupressure, or pressure medicine, on the respiratory complications of warfare in a group of such patients. The current work was based on a semi-experimental crossover methodology in which 30 patients at two stages of the disease were categorized in two groups and followed by pressure medicine exposure consisting of the application of Sea-bands attached to the wrist. Data were collected using a questionnaire from St. George and spirometry, both of which were carried out before and after the intervention.

The following significant conclusions were drawn:
1. Fifty-three point thirty-four percent 53.34% of subjects had a background of dyspnea.
2. There were significant differences in the mean frequency of cough and dyspnea attacks between men and women ($P = 0.05$).

Acupressure produced positive results in terms of respiratory symptom reduction and respiratory performance improvement according to the presented research findings.

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THE CHARACTERISTICS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE FAMILY IN CASES REFERRED TO A LEGAL MEDICAL CENTER IN NORTH OF IRAN

Domestic violence (DV) is the most prevalent form of violence against women with many social, psychological, and economic consequences. This study was conducted to identify the causes and effects of violence as well as the characteristics of victims of domestic violence. The results can be useful in the identification of victimized women and in determining the incidence of this problem as well as in selecting protective measures.

This study was cross-sectional and included women referred to the Legal Medical Center of Babol, northern Iran, between February 2001 and April 2002. Women with a history of domestic violence (DV) were identified ($n = 325$). Data were gathered through a questionnaire that was completed after an interview and examination.

The prevalence of DV was 36% among those referred to our center. Detected injuries were mostly physical, while 13% of victims complained of being forced to have sexual intercourse. Seventy-one percent of these women had psychosomatic symptoms of various kinds. The most common sites of injury were head and neck (22.3%) and extremities (21.6%). In most cases (54%) injuries were caused by beating. Assessment of injuries revealed that, in most instances, the result was bruising (42.4%). In most cases of wounding, abrasions or slight wounds had occurred (78%). The most common tools used to hurt these cases were hard objects (89.6%). The most important underlying causes of DV were drug abuse (31.1%) and behavioral disorders (29%). Statistical tests revealed a statistically significant correlation between individual, social, and family characteristics of the two groups (cases and controls).

Findings revealed a high prevalence of violence against women in Iran, as compared with other countries. This study showed that most cases of violence occur in families in which the couple is aged 20 – 40 years, married for less than 10 years, and has few children. Health-care professionals should be able to identify at-risk women and use their skills to protect them.

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MALPRACTICE CLAIMS ON NASAL SURGERIES REFERRED TO THE FORENSIC MEDICINE SERVICES IN TEHRAN, IRAN FROM 1996 TO 2002: A PRELIMINARY REPORT

Cosmetic and reconstructive septorhinoplasties have been increasing and are universally acknowledged as the most elegant, though most difficult, of all plastic surgical procedures. The inability to diagnose the possibilities and limitations inherent in each patient can result in some dangerous complications that may lead to legal malpractice lawsuits. The objective of this study was to evaluate the demographic characteristics of claimants developing complications after these surgeries.

A retrospective case-series study was conducted at the Forensic Medicine Service based in Tehran, Iran and included medical malpractice claim records filed and referred to the center. Data were extracted from medicolegal records. Clinical, demographic, and other predictor variables were gathered and then analyzed using SPSS software.

Of 120 cases studies, otolaryngologists were involved most commonly (n = 90, 75%). The mean ± SD age of claimants was 31.5 ± 12.5 years. Laboratory data and clinical examinations revealed underlying disease in 8 (6.7%) cases. Forty-six (38.3%) cases had had revisional surgery.

Asymmetry was the most common complication of surgery, followed by difficulty in breathing, dissatisfaction, death, septal perforation, and decrease in subjective olfaction, consecutively. No significant difference was seen in the frequency of complications between the general and local anesthesia, and also when comparing the place of surgery. Twelve (10%) lawsuits were due to surgeries that had resulted in death. Thirty-five (29%) surgeons were eventually acquitted.

This study disclosed some potential complications of nasal surgery. Septorhinoplasty should not be undertaken lightly; training and experience are essential. To minimize the risk of malpractice claims, surgeons who perform elective cosmetic surgeries should select patients appropriately.

Patients seeking elective cosmetic surgery are already unhappy with their appearances. Unrealistic expectations or psychological problems may also lead to unhappiness with the results and subsequently with the surgeon. When surgeons fail to recognize these issues, they may become entrapped in a situation that leads to litigation. Further comprehensive studies are needed to validate these results and to implement larger studies.

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