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Epidemiological and clinical characteristics of envenomation caused by snakes, scorpions and spiders in Tehran

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Abstract

Objective: Envenomation is sometimes difficult to diagnose especially when there is no definite animal at the scene. The current study was done to compare different presentations of envenomation by snakes, spiders, and scorpions.

Methods: Cases were collected from hospital files during a 3-year (2010-2012) period in Loghman Hakim Hospital. Diagnosis of envenomation was based on history and clinical presentations.

Results: One-hundred and eighty envenomation cases with mean age of 32±16 years (range 2-78 years) and predominantly males (71.7%) had been admitted during this time period, of whom, scorpions, snakes, and spiders had attacked 91 (50.6%), 72 (40%), and 5 cases (2.8%), respectively. In 12 cases (6.6%), envenoming animal was unknown. Hand fingers, legs, and wrists were the most common involved parts (63, 37, and 28 cases, respectively). Fang marks were present in 68 out of 72 cases (94%). Pain, swelling, bruise, and muscle weakness were the most common signs. Of routine lab tests, platelet count, creatinine, and INR were significantly different among envenoming animals ($p=0.001$, 0.008 and 0.033, respectively).

Conclusions: Lab tests and clinical presentations may be able to differentiate envenoming animals. Detailed examination of the bitten or stung parts are necessary to distinguish clinical effects of different animals and use appropriate anti-venom if applicable.