

A CLINICOEPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY ON SUSPECTED PIT VIPER BITES IN BANGLADESH

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Introduction: Pit viper bites are known to be the commonest among venomous snake bites in Bangladesh. They are usually attributed to cause painful local swelling. But the venom is known to have the potential to cause coagulopathy like other members of this family; Russell's viper. We present here a case series of 73 patients who presented with a history of suspected Green Pit Viper bite with in a period of 7 months.

Objectives: Recent countrywide epidemiological survey estimated an annual incidence of 623/100,000 and 6,041 deaths annually. The prevalent groups of venomous snakes are cobras, kraits, and vipers. One of the difficult aspects in management is diagnosis of the biting species. The objective of the study was to detect the envenomation consequences, nature of coagulopathy among patients in Bangladesh.

Methods: Seventy three patients with alleged pit viper bite who were admitted to snake bite clinic in Chittagong Medical College Hospital were prospectively followed during their hospital stay.

Results: Among the patients 51 (70%) were male. 33% of the patients were between 20 to 40 years. 68.5% of the accidents happened during day time. 27(37%) patients had coagulopathy detected by 20 minutes whole blood clotting test. The duration of coagulopathy ranged from 1 to 8 days. 14(52%) out of 27 patients had coagulopathy on admission. Due to logistic limitations only 13 patients underwent evaluation by Prothrombin time (PT) and activated partial thromboplastin time (APTT). PT was prolonged in 13 patients. APTT was prolonged (more than 40 seconds) in 2 patients. Patellate count was reduced 9 (less than 1500000, N= 13). All patients are treated symptomatically as there are no antidote is available.

Conclusions: Green pit viper bite is a cause of significant morbidity among snakebite cases in Bangladesh. Coagulopathy with a potential of serious outcome is a growing concern. This is more relevant as no antivenom is available. Large scale studies are needed to address this issue.