

**Background** Physical violence frequently brings victims to seek care in emergency departments, providing opportunity for prevention.

**Objective** To describe physical aggression-related injuries in youth 5–19 years presenting to an urban emergency department and identify risk factors.

**Methods** We used retrospective data from one paediatric tertiary centre affiliated with the Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program. Intentional injuries inflicted by other youth were examined from 1998 to 2007. Injuries were classified by age groups and characterised according to type, body part involved, place where they occurred, mechanism and disposition of the patient.

**Results** Five hundred four visits for non-accidental physical injuries were identified. There were 395 (78%) males. Thirty-nine (8%) patients were 5–9 years-old, 251 (50%) were 10–14 years-old and 214 (42%) were 15–19 years-old. Injuries were superficial (23%), open wounds (21%), concussions (19%) and fractures (17%). The head and face were involved most frequently (63%). When information was available, 50% of injuries occurred at school (153 of 306), and 63% involved bodily force (190 of 300). Twenty-five (5%) were admitted to the hospital for more severe injuries.

**Conclusion** In this study, most physical aggression-related injuries in youth occurred in 10–19 year-old boys, involved the head and face, occurred at school and resulted from bodily force. A small minority of patients were admitted. Youth that have been assaulted can be targeted for intervention and follow-up in order to manage the physical and psychological sequelae, as well as prevent their repeated victimisation, their possible evolution into perpetrators and enhance their empowerment.

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# **PEDIATRIC VIOLENCE-RELATED INJURIES PRESENTING TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT: EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RISK FACTORS**

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10.1136/ip.2010.029215.466