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**CHILDHOOD FALL, A MAJOR CAUSE OF MORBIDITY AND DISABILITY: EPIDEMIOLOGICAL FINDINGS FROM THE LARGEST POPULATION BASED SURVEY IN BANGLADESH**

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Childhood falls and their complications are a serious public health concern worldwide. However, very few programs have been developed to address the problem because of the lack of convincing data, especially in developing countries. Our study aimed at exploring the magnitude and associated factors of the childhood fall in Bangladesh.

**Methods** A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted during 2003 (January to December) in 12 randomly selected districts and Dhaka Metropolitan City of Bangladesh. Nationally representative data were collected from 171 366 households comprising 351 651 children of below 18 years of age. Information includes the number of deaths and illness at the household in the preceding year. Verbal autopsy and verbal diagnosis form was used to determine the cause of mortality and morbidity respectively.

**Results** Fall was the fourth leading cause of morbidity after infancy and the leading cause of morbidity among 5–9 years age group. The incidence of childhood fall was significantly higher among boys than in girls (642.8 vs 298.2 per 100 000 children year). Rural children (594.7 per 100 000 children-years) were the most vulnerable group, whereas home and its premises were found as the most common place for the incidence. Fall (28.9%) was the leading cause of injury-related permanent disability.

**Conclusion** The result of the study could provide insight to policymakers for future action on one of the leading causes of morbidity and disability among children in Bangladesh and possibly in other developing countries.