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FRACTURES FOLLOWING FALLS IN SRI LANKA

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Background Trauma is a leading cause of hospital admissions in Sri Lanka and of which, a major component are fractures sustained due to falls. However, only limited information is available on this important public health problem.

Aim To describe the demography and characteristics of fractures sustained following falls, in Sri Lanka.

Methods A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted on patients who sustained fractures following falls. The sample included all patients who attended the Orthopaedic post-surgical clinics of a tertiary care hospital, during 1 month in 2011. Data was collected using a structured, pre-tested, interviewer administered questionnaire, and analysed using SPSS 17.0 statistical software.

Results In this study sample (n=266), 49.6% were of 20 to 65 years of age and 14.6% were over 65 years. The rest (35.8%) were children and adolescents. The sample had 54.5% males. Of the patients below 40 years, 69.7% were males, while 62.9% were females in the group above 40 years. Single fractures were sustained by 70.3% and the rest had multiple fractures. Upper limb fractures were sustained by 54.4%, while 39% sustained lower limb fractures. Among children and adolescents, 83.2% had upper limb fractures, while in adults and elderly, 51.5% had lower limb fractures.

Significance Younger males and older females are at a higher risk of sustaining fractures following falls. Single fractures were more common than multiple fractures. Lower limbs were more affected in adults while children and adolescents had more upper limb fractures.