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ECONOMIC BURDEN OF VARIOUS INJURIES IN A LOW INCOME COMMUNITY

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Background Injuries pose an economic problem of immense proportion to communities in every society. Studies aimed at estimating financial losses that are incurred as a result of traumatic injuries by the patient and caregivers are very limited especially in this environment. The economic burden from injuries can be quantified through cost-of-injury studies, using techniques adopted from cost-of-illness research.

Aims/Objectives/Purpose To ascertain the direct costs of traumatic injuries and their determinants.

Methods Patients who presented to the accident and emergency unit of the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital in Ilorin following traumatic injury were recruited. The incurred direct costs estimated were calculated for each patient until discharge. These include the hospital admission bills, costs of drugs used, costs of procedures, investigations, etc.

Results/Outcome 72% of the 168 patients recruited were male and majority of them were young adults. Mean direct cost per injury was N 4061 (\$27.1) with cost of drugs and procedures accounting for 37.2% and 27.4% of the total costs respectively.

Significance/Contribution to the Field The calculated direct costs of injury from this study represent a significant economic drain in this environment where 64% of the population lives on less than \$1.25 per day. Extrapolating even these limited cost estimates of direct medical treatment to the fatal as well as the even larger non-fatal injury burden in Nigeria, exposes the immense financial drain to the individual patient, their caregivers as well as the larger community.