

Concurrent C: Disaster Management

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BLOWN AWAY: CYCLONE RELATED INJURIES

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Background Cyclone Yasi, a category 5 cyclone with wind gusts of up to 290 km/h crossed the Queensland coast near Mission Beach approximately 150 km north of Townsville on the evening of the 2 February 2011. In Townsville 170 000 home were left without power and the estimated damage bill across the region was Australian \$3.5 billion.

Aims/Objective/Purpose To explore the epidemiology of injuries from cyclone Yasi within the Townsville region.

Methods Data on all cases which presented to TTH were extracted for the periods 31 January 2011 to 8 February 2011 (9 day) and an equivalent period from 2010 for comparison.

Results/Outcome There were 2003 patients treated at the hospital during this period (note there were only seven people seen between 18:00 2 February and 6:00 3 February); one third of presentations were injury-related which was 39% more than the previous year. Of injured patients, 10% were aged less than 5 years, 22% were aged less than 15 years and 9% were over 70 years of age. 59% were male. The top five injuries during this time were open wound of wrist and hand (6.9%), open wound to head (4.5%), multiple open wounds of ankle and foot (4.5%), sprain and strain of other and unspecified parts of lumbar spine and pelvis (4.1%), and open wound of the scalp (3.6%). Increase in injuries were found for all age-groups especially 50–54 years (272%) (except 15–19 years which decrease by 15%).

Significance/Contribution to the Field This is the first time in Australia that the injuries sustained during a cyclone have been explored in such detail.