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VIOLENT INJURIES IN NIGERIA: INCREASING OCCURRENCE BUT LOW PRIORITY ON PREVENTIVE MEASURES

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¹F Chukwuneke, ²C Anyanechi. ¹College of Medicine, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu, Nigeria; ²College of Medicine, University of Calabar Teaching Hospital Calabar, Nigeria

Background Violent injuries among Nigerian civilian population are on the increase, almost approaching an epidemic level. This is attributable to the rising violent crime rate as a result of hardship, high level of unemployment, political crisis, religious and ethnic conflicts, police brutality and high incidence of armed robbery.

Aims/Objectives/Purpose The purpose of this study was to characterise the total burden of violent injuries in Eastern Nigeria over a 5-year recent period from 2006 to 2010 and identified the trends in the number of cases.

Method A multicentre retrospective review of 126 cases of violent injuries seen in the trauma units of five specialists' hospitals in eastern Nigeria was analysed. All the cases were categorised by the age, sex, aetiology, type of injury and the year of presentation.

Results/Outcome One hundred and twenty-six cases seen for the 5-year period accounted for 46.2% of all the trauma injuries. There were 76 males (60.4%) and 50 females (39.6%) giving a male-to-female ratio of 1.6:1. The most common type of injury was gunshot (64%) followed by stab injuries (17%). Domestic violence was high (32.6%). The highest number of cases was recorded in 2010 (28.6%).

Significance/Contribution to the Field This study has shown an increasing trend in the occurrence of violent injuries in Nigeria. Most victims were inflicted with gunshot injuries. With the changing political situation, social advancement and urbanisation, economic frustrations and ethnic conflicts, there is a need to regulate the influx of deadly weapons in the country by the relevant agencies.

Table 1 Types of violent injuries and the number of cases

Cause of injury	No of the cases	Percentage
Gunshot	81	64%
Stab injuries	21	17%
Others	24	19%

Table 2 Trends in the number of Violent Injury Cases per year

Year	Number of cases	Percentage
2006	19	15%
2007	29	23%
2008	20	15.9
2009	22	17.5%
2010	36	28.6%