

NEGLECTED COMPARTMENT SYNDROME OF LEFT FOREARM IN A 2 YEARS OLD BOY: A CASE REPORT

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Introduction: Compartment syndrome is a surgical condition which requires immediate treatment when diagnosed. Time is of utmost importance to avoid and minimize ischemic damage. Delay in treatment of compartment syndrome has a devastating effect that can include amputations and even death. Trauma is by far the most common cause of compartment syndrome, of which fractures of the midshaft radius or ulna and distal radius fracture are the most common causes in children.

Discussion: A 8 years old boy presented with dry gangrene extending from his left hand till mid forearm. Patient had an alleged fall 1 month ago, landing on his left forearm. Unfortunately, parents did not seek medical treatment and went for traditional massage. Patient complained of intense pain over the initial first few days after fall. Subsequently, patient left hand and forearm started to turn necrotic. Upon examination, dry gangrene up to level of left mid forearm, well demarcated with radius and ulna bone exposed. No pulse is detected and no neurological function. X ray shows a distal left radius and ulna fracture. Based on history, clinical and radiological findings, a diagnosis of missed compartment syndrome of the left forearm is made. A left mid forearm amputation was performed.

Conclusion: A delayed or missed diagnosis of compartment syndrome will lead to an irreversible damage or permanent disability to an individual. As in this case report, it is very rare for a missed compartment syndrome to be brought in such late stages, leading to a forearm amputation in a child. Therefore, an urgent referral, assessment and treatment is always warranted, as we have the medical facility and specialty available in every major district in Malaysia to cater for the needs of Malaysian. Consequently, more health education and awareness should be advocated to the public to prevent future occurrence of such neglect.