

"TOO MANY FINGERS" TRAUMA

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Introduction: Traumatic hand and finger injury as a result of mishandling or faulty machine are devastating to both, patient and the surgeon. It can range from simple cut to severe crush injury. Simple handheld machine to industrial scale stamping machine may give different type of injury. Severity of injury, patient's expectation, surgeon experience and post-op rehabilitation program are an important factors in determining the outcome.

Discussion: A 42 year old lady was referred after her right hand was trapped in a slicing machine in biscuit factory when she tried to clean it, without a protective glove. Upon arrival to our center, she was briefed regarding the severity of the injury and in view of more than 6 hours post trauma, the decision regarding which finger can be save will be decided intra-operatively. During surgery, noted multiple through and through vertical laceration wound over all fingers, contaminated with foreign body particles. Vertical fractures of all phalanges with unstable joint. Flexor and extensor tendon macerated and most of digital neurovascular bundles were compromised with wide zone of injury. Right middle and little finger were not salvageable, thus proceeded with MCPJ disarticulation. The remaining finger fractures are fixed with 1.0 and 1.2mm k-wire. Patient underwent another 2 consecutive surgery for re-debridement and fusion of unstable PIPJ of right ring finger. 10 months after last surgery, with intensive rehabilitation, patient able to use her right hand for activity of daily living. She has acceptable holding and tripod finger grip.

Conclusion: Based on Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences, from January to June 2012, out of 297 industrial injuries, 24.9% were hand and finger injuries. The initial decision and first surgery are critical to determine the final outcome of the patient. The main aim in managing traumatic hand and finger injury is to preserve optimum hand function.