

# **“The Higher You Climb The Harder You Fall”- An Analysis Of Injury Patterns Resulting From Falls From Trees**

Yunus MS, Phang YY, Lim WY, Randhawa SS, Han CS, Aziz MY

*Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Hospital Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah (HoSHAS), Temerloh, Pahang, 28000, Malaysia.*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Falls comprise a significant cause of morbidity and mortality with the brain, spinal cord and extremities being the most commonly injured organs [1,2]. At our center, fall from height comprise one of the leading causes of musculoskeletal injuries and morbidity. Of these, falls from trees represent 41% of all cases of fall from height reported. This study was designed to identify the incidence and injury patterns of falls sustained from trees in order to establish effective fall prevention guidelines.

## **METHODS:**

This study is a retrospective review of all cases of falls from trees and its related injuries resulting in admission between January 2016 and December 2016 at the Orthopaedic department of Hospital Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah (HoSHAS), Temerloh. Patient records were analysed to identify specific injury patterns such as upper or lower limb fractures, spinal cord injury and head injury, caused by falls from trees.

## **RESULTS:**

29 cases were identified. 89 percent (n= 26) of the patients were males and 11% (n=3) were females. The mean age was 34 years (range of 7 to 78 years). Average hospital stay was 6 days. Thoracolumbar (51.7%), distal end radius (17.2%), tibia (10.3%) and ankle (10.3%) fractures constituted the most common fractures encountered in our patients. 45% of falls occurred from August to October. 62% of falls occurred from fruit trees of which a third of them were due to falls from rambutan trees.

## **DISCUSSIONS:**

Our findings are interesting in that the incidence and timing of falls from trees reflect the local activity and seasonal activity of the geographical area. Most of the falls occurred during the fruit season which may indicate increased tree climbing activity during that

period. Furthermore the observation that climbing rambutan trees incurred the highest morbidity could be due to its softer branches which may not withstand a grown man's weight. Hence measures could be taken to discourage climbing rambutan trees and to encourage alternative ways of obtaining the delicious rambutans.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Falls from trees involve mostly young males who form the productive group of the population. Effective fall prevention guidelines and proper government policies will help reduce incidences and improve outcome.

## **REFERENCES:**

1. Schermer R. Carot injuries due to falls from height: subcommittee on injury prevention and control. American College
2. Syed A. Tabish et. al. Injury Extra 2004; 32(9): 65-67.