

Physical Assault Leading to Grievous Hurt: A Case Report

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ABSTRACT

A 17 years old male was presented to emergency department, NAMS Bir Hospital, with a history of physical assault and had a stab wound on the left frontal region. Grievous hurt were also discussed according to the criminal code of Nepal (Muluki ain). The details of the injuries of the patient have been discussed in this case report.

Keywords: *physical assault; stab wound; grievous hurt.*

INTRODUCTION

Violence is a leading cause of preventable injury worldwide.¹⁻⁴ Stab wound is produced when force is delivered along the long axis of a narrow or pointed object, such as knife, dagger, nail, needle etc. into the depths of the body.⁵ As per Muluki Ain (New criminal code 2074) of Nepal Part I, chapter 14, Article 2, the following injuries are considered grievous: loss of eyesight or blind, deprivation of smelling capacity of the nose, making deaf upon damaging the hearing capacity of the ear, damage to the speaking capacity of the tongue, making useless upon cutting the breast of a woman, making a female sterile and making a male impotent upon destroying the capacity of the male organ and testicle, making useless the backbone (Vertebra/Spine) hands, legs or joints of such organs upon causing destruction, fracture or dislocation and physical trauma making a person unable to perform his work.⁶

CASE REPORT

A case of physical assault by sharp weapon sustaining injury over left frontal region was presented to emergency department, NAMS Bir Hospital. The person was male aged about 17 years with no history of loss of consciousness, vomiting, blurring of vision, abnormal body movements, urine/stool incontinence.

He was admitted to Neurosurgery department. On local examination, stab injury was present in left frontal region with visible end of knife protruding outside with no active bleeding. Systemic examination had normal findings.

CT Scan of head showed penetrating foreign body on left frontal region with surrounding hematoma upto 4 cm depth with pneumocephalus.

Emergency surgery (Left frontal craniotomy and removal of foreign body and evacuation of subdural hematoma) was done on the day of admission. Operative findings showed metal blade penetrating through left frontal scalp perforating bone and dura and extending to a depth of 2.5 cm into the left frontal lobe. Minimal subdural hematoma (SDH) at left frontal region with pneumocephalus was seen.

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Medicolegal examination was done. On local examination, horizontal surgical incised wound was present on frontal region of 14cm with multiple staplers, not bleeding.

Medicolegal opinion of the person comprised of

- a. Condition of examinee: stable
- b. Severity of injury: Severe (Grievous hurt)
- c. Age of injury: 6-7 days
- d. Causative object: Sharp weapon

The person was discharged after 6 days and his post-operative period was uneventful.

DISCUSSION

Violence and its consequences lead to severe injuries and put a heavy burden on health care. The economic costs of violence include the costs of medical and legal services, loss of earning and productivity and reduced quality life. The magnitude of health consequences of assaultive violence and its psycho-social and economic sequel indicates the need for effective preventive strategies. In assault cases male sex outnumbered female both as victim and assailant.⁷ Victims of assaults were frequently young adults, belonging to 15-34 years of age group.⁸ Assault were usually associated with alcohol intake, drug abuse and financial problems leading to aggressive behavior.

Assailant generally select the most vital body parts which can be easily stroked and result in grievous hurt. In the present case although the victim had sustained injuries which endangered his life, none of the injuries mentioned in our criminal law included the injury of the head, skull or brain. Medicolegal opinion about the type of injury was declared grievous because of the last point (Physical trauma making a person unable to perform

his work). Thus, it becomes difficult for a medicolegal expert in such cases.

Prevention of violence should focus on young adults and men. Education programs, restricting availability of alcohol and development of support and guidance group are some measures to prevent violence. Proper legislation and codes of practice related to grievous hurt should be revised and implemented strictly.

CONSENT: Case Report Consent Form was signed by the patient

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None

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