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FATAL INJURIES AMONG CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS, SOUTH PROVINCES (BASRA, MISAN, MUTHANA, THI-QAR), IRAQ, 2010-2015

Faris Lami¹ and Khitam Ali

¹University of Baghdad, Iraq

Background: Child injury is a growing but preventable global public health problem. For every person killed by injury, 30 people are hospitalized and 300 are treated in emergency rooms that may live with varying degrees of disability. Every day >2,000 children die from injuries. This study is conducted to describe the epidemiological characteristics, estimate incidence and identify mechanism of fatal injuries (FI) among under five years' children (U5) in four south provinces (Basra, Misan, Muthana, and Thiqr), Iraq, 2010-2015.

Methods: This cross sectional study was conducted on the data obtained from Iraqi Injury Surveillance System. The mortality part of the injury surveillance is a population based involving the coroner offices in four south provinces (Basra, Misan, Muthana, and Thiqr), Iraq. U5 population data were obtained from Ministry of Planning.

Results: The total number of reported U5 FI during this period was 1,022 with an average annual incidence of 24.7/100,000

U5 population (P). It represents 22.2% of FI among U5 and 1.4% of total FI of all ages. The incidence of FI increased from 17.1/100,000 U5P in 2010 to 28.7/100,000 U5P in 2015. Male to female ratio of FI was 1.6:1 and 28.9% occurred at the age of two years. About 50.1% occurred at home. 79.1% were unintentional with average annual incidence 17.5/100,000 U5P, 63% occurred during 6 am-3 pm. The main causes of FI were: road traffic accidents (22.6%), drowning (19.8%), burn (16.9%), electric shock (9.6%), fall (7.3%) and explosions (2.9%). The highest average incidence was reported in Muthana (54.2/100,000U5P) and the lowest was reported in Basra (8.7/100,000U5P) governorate.

Conclusions: The increasing incidence of FI is the tip of the iceberg which indicates that every year thousands of U5 are injured and hundreds end with disability. Public health officials need to develop a comprehensive program to control injuries among young children particularly the traffic and home injuries.

farislami@gmail.com