

with one hand amputated, 2 persons with one foot amputated and chest and abdomen injuries). Twenty-three eyes (13.6%) were eviscerated. Four eyes (2.4%) were given an implanted IOL. Sixty-one patients (98 eyes: 58%) did not return for check-up.

Discussion

The figures show that war injuries represent 1.0% of all people with eye problems who attended the eye hospital and that war injury is a major public health problem in Afghanistan. In contrast to civil eye trauma, which is usually unilateral,⁴ in war eye trauma the victim is prone to injuries affecting both eyes (45.7% in this study) and bilateral blindness (visual acuity <3/60: 10.4% in this study). War eye injuries were found more often among males in all age groups and is most common in the age groups between 11 and 30 years.

More than half the patients (52.6%) have not returned for check-up. A number of factors influence the final outcome for the war-injured eye(s).

1. The severity of the initial lesion, particularly in open-eye injuries.

2. The quality of first aid and the definitive eye care.⁵
3. The time since injury, the distance travelled and essential eye care all influence the outcome. Transport difficulties, lack of near eye care services, and the critical general health condition of many injured patients, require some time with the orthopaedic surgeon and the general surgeon. Relatives of the injured consult the ophthalmologist very late.
4. Poor general health status and the psychological status of the injured (e.g., amputation of hand(s) or leg(s) or death of family member(s)).

Recommendations

1. In the short term, clear marking of the areas which have been mined should be carried out, and avoidance of areas known to be mined. Government and concerned international organisations should organise awareness campaigns about mines and explosive materials for the general public.
2. In the long term, international organisations should help Afghan people to remove 7–8% of the world's unmarked mines, thus preventing more casualties

and disabilities. Agricultural production could increase by 88–200% in different regions of Afghanistan.⁶

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