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**Georgia Dogs: Characteristics and morbidity of dog bites in 1230 consecutive children.**

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**Introduction:** Plastic Surgeons are routinely called to manage dog bites in pediatric emergency rooms (ER). To better understand the scope of what may be a preventable problem, we reviewed our experience in a large metropolitan area of Georgia.

**Methods:** A retrospective review was conducted using data from 2010-2013. Data was extracted using ICD-9 codes from ER encounters at two pediatric hospitals.

**Results:** 1230 children presented to the ER. The mean age was 6.8 ±4.2 (5days-20 years), 57% male. The most prevalent age group was children 5 and under (41%). 5.2% required operative intervention and 53.8% of lacerations were repaired in the ER. Location of bite was: head/face (55%), upper extremity (23%), lower extremity (15%), trunk (6%), other (1%). 85.8% were familiar to the child, 45.9% was the family dog.

Regional distribution was tabulated by city. 31% of bites had identified breed, most prevalent being Pit bull(39%), Mixed(13%), Labradors(7.6%).

While the most prevalent operative intervention was, irrigation/debridement (67%), other patients underwent: revascularization of hand, replantation of lip, craniectomy, and exploratory laparotomy. The lone mortality included a 5-dayold infant following emergency craniotomy. 50% of operative interventions were related to pit bull attacks.

6.3% of patients returned to the ED after initial visit with most common reason being cellulitis (40.2%), and additional 15% were admitted for IV antibiotics.

**Conclusion:** Our study identified several characteristics that may be targets for public health intervention. In our region, the youngest children were at highest risk, and pit bulls tended to be the greatest offenders.

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Links to recent dog bite injuries TV news stories in Georgia:


Links to Dog bite statistics and prevention:


Selected Publications:

Rohrich, R. J. Man’s best friend revisited: who’s watching the children? Plast Reconstr Surg
1999;103:2067-2068

Weiss, H. B., Friedman, D. I., Coben, J. H. Incidence of dog bite injuries treated in emergency

2014.

surgery 2011;253:791-797.