

The Pattern and Management Outcome of Gastric and Intestinal Foreign Bodies in Children Seen at Muhimbili National Hospital

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Keywords: foreign body, paediatrics, gastric, intestinal, management, outcomes

Abstract

Background: Finding an ingested sub-diaphragmatic foreign body in paediatrics is common and represents a considerable nervousness to parents. The vast majority is expelled uneventfully within one week of ingestion, however, sometimes can lead to complications and mortality. The purpose of this study was to explain the pattern of ingested gastric and intestinal foreign bodies, its management and outcomes in children at Muhimbili National Hospital.

Methods: A prospective cross-sectional study was conducted in the paediatric surgery unit from April 2012 to October 2013 to children below 10 years of age using a structured questionnaire. Symptoms free children were discharged for observation at home and symptomatic children or with risky objects were planned to be cared in the hospital.

Results: A total of 33 children were studied, Boys being 72.7% (24/33), M: F=2.7:1. The under 5-years were the majority (78.8%, 26/33). The commonest ingested foreign bodies were Coins (42.4%, 14/33), Nails (18.2%, 6/33) and screws (12.1%, 4/33). The mean length of ingested foreign bodies was 2.47 centimeters (± 0.56 SD). The transient time was less than one week in the majority of children (90.9%, 30/33). The average transient time was 4.1 ± 0.05 SD days. All children passed their foreign bodies under observation at home uneventfully.

Conclusion: Foreign bodies risk of ingestion is high in under fives and conservative observational treatment is successful in the majority.