

Cerebral palsy in Dar Es Salaam

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Abstract

Between December 1985 and July 1986 a study on cerebral palsy was undertaken among the inpatients and outpatients of the department of Paediatrics and Child Health, Muhimbili Medical Centre, Dar Es Salaam. The objective of the study was to determine the clinical pattern of cerebral palsy and its associated handicaps. During this period, 100 children with cerebral palsy 56 boys and 44 girls ranging in age between four months and 10 years were seen. The commonest type of cerebral palsy seen was spastic tetraplegia which occurred in 36 percent of the cases followed by spastic diplegia and hemiplegia seen in 20 and 15 percent of the cases respectively. In 70 children the cerebral palsy was associated with other severe handicaps, the commonest being epilepsy which occurred in 35 percent of the children followed by deafness, speech disorders and blindness. Birth asphyxia, convulsions of undetermined causes, low birth weight, meningitis and cerebral birth trauma were found to be the leading causes of cerebral palsy. As these conditions are largely preventable or amendable to treatment, it is suggested that improvement of antenatal and perinatal care is important in the reduction of the incidence of cerebral palsy.

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