
Alcohol and drug use – a common cause of facial fractures

8 May 2018

A Wellington study has shone a spotlight on the extent of interpersonal violence in the region, particularly when involving alcohol or drug use.

The retrospective study, which was based on five year worth of data on maxillofacial fractures at Hutt Hospital between 2013 and 2017, showed that violence was the leading cause of facial fracture presentations.

Dr Kimberley Sent Doux, a surgical registrar at Hutt Hospital, will this week be presenting the results of her study in poster format to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons' Annual Scientific Congress in Sydney. She said the results provided an informative breakdown of the causes of fractures, and could be a useful guide in determining public policy in the Wellington Region.

"Our study analysed 1535 maxillofacial fractures over the five years. It found that violence accounted for almost 40 percent of all presentations. Falls and sporting injuries were the next most common causes, both representing just under a quarter of all presentations."

"Of the 583 violence related fractures, 38 percent were associated with alcohol and drug use. This is a significant number and is something we need to look at in moving forward. We would like to see more targeted public health strategies to combat this problem, and hopefully lead to a significant decrease in the number of violent related facial fractures that we are seeing."

Surgeons frequently treat injuries caused by drug and alcohol fuelled violence on a daily basis throughout New Zealand, and Dr Sent Doux's poster presentation follows several years' worth of advocacy by RACS to combat this problem.

Dr Sent Doux will be presenting her poster titled "Interpersonal Violence Especially Involving Alcohol and Drug Use is the Most Common Cause of Maxillofacial Fractures" at the upcoming Royal Australasian College of Surgeons' 87th Annual Scientific Congress which is being held in Sydney between 7-11 May. The congress brings together some of the top surgical and medical minds from across New Zealand, Australia, and the rest of the world.

For more information about the Annual Scientific Congress please visit: <https://asc.surgeons.org/>

About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.
www.surgeons.org

Media inquiries: Mark Morgan, Policy and Communications Officer
+61 8 8219 0922 or +61 488 218 009