



Cause and treatment of burn injuries in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: baseline data from a prospective study

Professor Andrew Holland¹, Dr Tamara Mackean², Dr Kate Hunter², Professor Roy Kimble⁴, Professor Kathleen Clapham³, Julieann Coombes², Courtney Ryder² Prof. Rebecca Ivers² for the Coolamon Study Investigators

¹Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, Westmead, Australia, ²The George Institute For Global Health, UNSW, Sydney, Australia, ³University of Wollongong, Wollongong, Australia, ⁴Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, Brisbane, Australia

BACKGROUND & AIMS

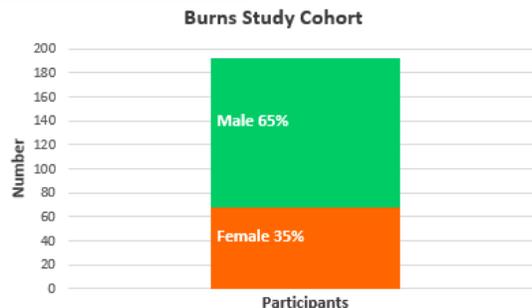
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children experience burns at least double the rate of other children. Consistent access to high quality care remains fundamental to good outcomes following a burn injury. The Coolamon Study will describe the burden of burns, access to care, and functional outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: this paper describes characteristics of the cohort.

METHODS

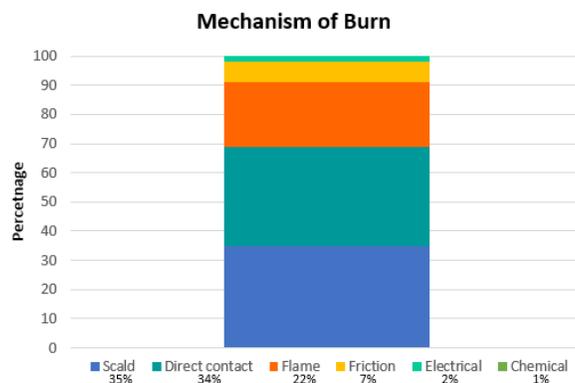
For this prospective study recruitment centres were located in 5 tertiary paediatric burn services in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory. Participants were recruited between 2015-17, with inclusion criteria requirements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, ≤ 16 years of age and presenting with a burn.

Quantitative data was collected via participant interviews, over 5 time points (baseline, 3, 6, 12 and 25 months); clinical data was captured from medical records and linkage to MBS/PBS records. Data collected included sociodemographic (age, place of residence, family structure, family disruption, household income and education), burns first aid treatment (type, time from injury and duration), treatment (timing, type), transportation to hospital (mode, duration), health related quality of life, pain, itch and activity limitations, return to school.

RESULTS



To date 192 children have been recruited, with an over representation of male children. The median age of presentation was 2 years of age, with 44% of participants aged 0-2 years. A higher proportion of participants were inpatients in Adelaide (90%) and Townsville (73%) compared to in other sites (33%).



The most common mechanism of burns injury was scalds (35%) followed by direct contact (34%). In the majority of cases (83%) first aid was delivered at the location of burn. First aid at the scene of the burn was more commonly reported for scalds (97%) and contact burns (86%) than for flame burns (78%), electrical burns (67%) or for friction burns (25%).



Image: Family participating in the study.

Further follow up treatment was received from the nearest hospital in 79% of cases, where a large number of cases (86%) were clinically assessed on the day of injury.

CONCLUSION

Burns sustained by children in this cohort were largely scald and contact burns in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander boys 2 years and under. Although first aid was applied in the majority of cases, delays were present in both application of first aid and hospital care.

Contact: Professor Rebecca Ivers, ivers@georgeinstitute.org.au

The beautiful Aboriginal art work depicted on this slide is by Aboriginal Artist Colin Weetra (1953-2017) and is titled Budgery.