

Child head entrapment in a cooking pot

Bharati U

Department of Emergency medicine, Nepal medical college Teaching Hospital, Kathmandu

Correspondence address: Dr Urmila Bharati, Senior consultant and Head, Department of Emergency, Nepal medical college, Kathmandu

Email: ubharati_ub@yahoo.com

Phone no: 9851069320

Abstract

This is a case report of a child who was brought to the Emergency department with the entrapped head in the cooking pot. The cooking pot was safely removed out of the head without any complications. This case demonstrates the age related susceptibility in the young to the possible lethal head entrapment.

Introduction

Accidental deaths in infancy and early childhood often results from young children's lack of understanding of dangers of certain situation and inability to come out of such situations themselves. In addition, relative large head and weak neck musculature predispose them to such head entrapment.¹ The head entrapment could lead to asphyxial death if treatment is not instituted in time. There were news from western countries citing head entrapment resulting in death of a child from metal futon bunk beds, the hazard resulting in recall of this type of beds.² This case has been reported in view of its unique type of presentation (Head stuck inside a cooking pot!) not described so far in the literatures. In addition it gives an overview of possible consequences of head entrapment if proper management is not done in time.

Case history

An 18 months old male child was brought to the Emergency department of Nepal Medical College Teaching Hospital with the history of Entrapped head in a cooking pot of 2 hours duration (Figure-1)



Fig.1: Entrapped Head in cooking pot.

He was playing with another child when he used this cooking pot to wear as a cap which got stuck and the head was entrapped; the pot could not be pulled out of the head.

On examination his vitals were normal. There were no signs of asphyxia and the systemic examination was normal.

The cooking pot was cut (Figure 2) with a Saw at one end (Figure 3) and was removed off the head without any complications.



Fig.2: Cooking pot cut open



Fig.3: Sequence show entrapped head, cut open cooking pot and saw used to cut cooking pot.

Discussion

Head entrapment is a serious concern on playgrounds, since it could lead to strangulation and death. A child's head may become entrapped if the child enters an opening either feet first or head first. Head entrapment by head first entry generally occurs when children place their heads through an opening in one orientation, and then are unable to get themselves out. Head entrapment by feet first entry involves children who generally sit or lie down and slide their feet into an opening that is large enough to permit their heads to go through.³

Most of the cases of lethal entrapment of head of a young child have been described in literature from western countries. This included mostly injuries from shopping

Cart and stroller.^{1,4} This case is one of the types of head entrapment possible in developing country like ours. Cooking pot ('Kasaudi') is very common utensils in kitchen of each and every household in Nepal. A child who is very innocent and unaware of the possible danger, while playing, could easily slide their head inside such pot and not get out of it. The consequence of such entrapment could range from contusions/haematoma, abrasions, laceration, craniocerebral trauma including fractures from the fall to asphyxial death if not managed in time. Asphyxial death may occur due to cardiac inhibition because of carbon dioxide narcosis similar to that of accidental smothering of children by a plastic bag.⁵ Fortunately, our case did not have any of the complications and was successfully managed.

Conclusion

Head entrapment in a cooking pot is an uncommon condition seen in the Emergency department. The consequences of entrapment may range from minor trauma to asphyxial deaths. The condition has to be managed promptly in order to avoid asphyxial complications.

References

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