

# **(1840) Wounds Caused By Firearms In El Salvador, 2003–2004: Epidemiological Issues**

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### **PROBLEM**

El Salvador spends 13% of its GNP (2003)<sup>27</sup> in violence and its sequels. This economic impact also means social and human consequences on the families and the community. There is a cost in material resources and there is a cost in human care.

Who are responsible of these wounds? Who are the victims? What are the circumstances under which the event is favored? How much does it cost the hospital care for these patients?

### **OBJECTIVES**

CONTRIBUTE TO THE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE ON THE IMPACT OF NON-LETHAL WOUNDS BY FIREARMS (WFA). IDENTIFY THE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PROFILE OF 100 CASES OF WFA IN "ROSALES" PUBLIC NATIONAL HOSPITAL

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ESTIMATE THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF WFA AT THE HOSPITAL AND SOCIETY LEVEL

DISCLOSE THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY IN ORDER TO INCREASE AWARENESS AMONG HEALTH PERSONNEL

### **METHOD**

epidemiological, observational descriptive, that includes the following issues: A statistical review of previous information on wounds caused by firearms (WFA) in El Salvador.

- The morbidity and mortality of the event according to the "Rosales" Public National Hospital files
- A descriptive study of 100 WFA admitted to the "Rosales" Public National Hospital from June 2003 to May 2004.

#### **DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING**

Results of the Survey form, epidemiological profile, non-lethal WFA cases were processed using Software SPSS 11.5 for Windows and direct visual review of the hospital files in order to determine severity of lesions, accomplished medical- surgical procedures and lab tests. Hospital and Medical Care Procedures and Costs were presented in tables.

### **RESULTS**

#### **LETHAL TOOL**

80% of the polled patients assured that the arm was a commercially manufactured one and 3% mentioned a craft weapon. In 50% of the events the arm used was a pistol. There was no mention of military arms in any of the events.

The one hundred WFA hospital files that were reviewed with the two tools consumed, in total, 1,482 days/bed, with an average of 14.82 days/bed per file.

Total cost of hospital care was USD\$ 308,445.46 cost per admission was USD\$ 3,084.45 and cost per day amounted to USD\$ 208.13. ESTIMATE OF INDIRECT COSTS BASED ON DIRECT COSTS According to Rice's theory which establishes the costs based on the pathology, injuries and traumas consumed 23% of both medical and non-medical expenses. For this study, the expenses would be USD\$ 7,402,680.00 and the costs for WFA morbidity would amount to USD\$ 32,185,565.2173

### **CONCLUSION**

Violence by firearms is exerting a deep impact on the people's health and family budget. The national hospital network cared for 30.4% of WFA homicides and "Rosales" Public National Hospital carried 26% of this group. Due to high lethality, most of the WFA individuals do not reach the hospital emergency rooms.