



EMERGING TREND IN CONFLICT BETWEEN HUMAN AND WILD ANIMALS - AN AUTOPSY BASED STUDY

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ABSTRACT Human-wild animal conflict refers to the interaction between human and wild animals. It creates negative impact on human or their resources or wild animals or their habitat. We analyzed the pattern of injuries and death caused by large animals by using available from department of Forensic medicine, Coimbatore medical college, Coimbatore from January 2013 to December 2017. The results show that elephant and bison are most commonly involved in attacks. Attack by elephant is more in winter season. Hence the conflicts between Human-Wildlife interaction can be avoided by 1) providing food, water for wildlife in the forests 2) limiting human activities within their villages. Most victims were a) frequent forest visitors b) those who reside in small unsecured houses near the forest. It can be prevented by strict implementation of forest conservation act.

KEYWORDS : Wild life, Conflict, Forest conservation act

INTRODUCTION

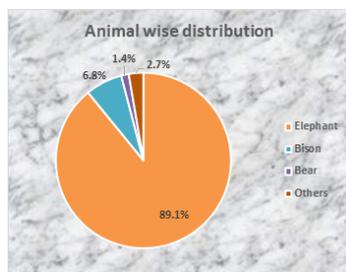
Worldwide there are lot off conflict between human and wild animals that occur due to deforestation and lack of natural prey (1). In world 11440 people were killed by wild animals in 2017. In India 28 people are killed by wild animals everyday. 330 elephant attack deaths and 112 tiger attack deaths occurred every year. In Tamilnadu animal attacks are more common in western regions i.e. Coimbatore regions.

MATERIALS AND METHOD:

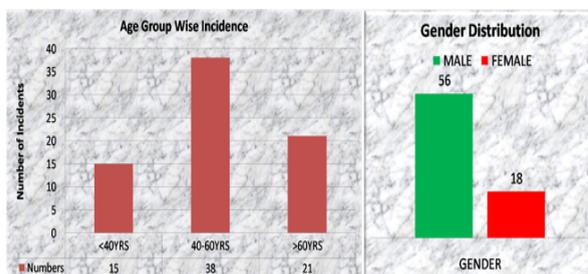
It is a retrospective study conducted in the Department of Forensic medicine, Coimbatore Medical College, Coimbatore from January 2013 to December 2017. The following parameters were collected from the records in the department and analysed: the victim's sex and age, time and area of occurrence, season, fatal injuries caused by animals and type of the animals.

RESULT:

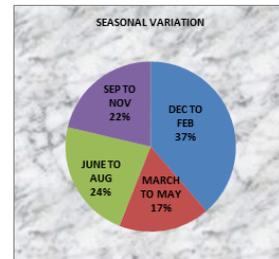
A total number of 74 cases were analysed. Among these 66 cases (89.1%) were Elephant attack deaths, 5 cases (6.8%) were Bison attack deaths, 1 case (1.4%) was Bear attack death and 2 cases (2.7%) were unknown animal attack deaths.



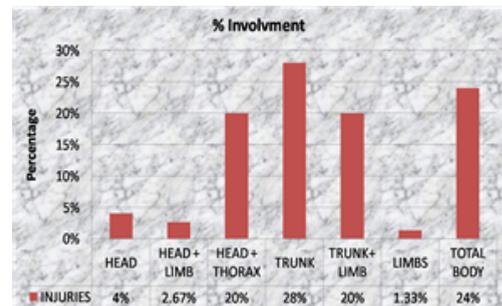
Commonly affected age was between 40 -60 years (47.3%) and sex was male (63.5%).



Most frequent occurrence time was between 4am to 6.30am (48.7%). Most of the animal attacks i.e. 27 cases (36.5%) took place between December and February (winter season)(2).



Common fatal injuries were thoraco-abdominal (trunk) injuries (28%) followed by total body injuries (24%), head & trunk injuries (20%), trunk & limb injuries (20%), head injury (4%), head & limb injuries (2.67%) and limb injuries (1.33%)(3)



89% of the animal attack cases were elephant attack deaths(2). Most of the attacks took place when the victims went for open air defecation. Common place of occurrence was near to Western Ghats.

DISCUSSION:

Understanding patterns on Human-Wildlife conflict and identifying the underlying causes are important components of conservation biology(1). Elephants were the top conflict species in terms of total attacks followed by Bison and Bear(2). Our results suggested that Human-Elephant conflicts are the most serious human-wildlife conflict challenges(2,4). Elephants are the largest mammals & they are roaming in vast areas while foraging for large quantities of food. However, elephant habitats have been encroached upon by humans to support the growing human population(1,4). The pronounced occurrence of human-elephant conflicts may be attributed to a) loss of forests along seasonal migratory routes, b) shrinkage of available forest area. Hence the conflicts between Human-Wildlife interaction can be avoided by 1) providing food, water for wildlife in the forests 2) limiting human activities within their villages. Most victims were a) frequent forest visitors b) those who reside in small unsecured houses near the forest.

CONCLUSION:

Conflicts between Human and wild animals are serious problems in many parts of the world due to deforestation(4). Lack of natural food habitats has forced wild animals to come close to human settlements and attack them(5). It can be prevented by strict implementation of forest conservation act and spreading awareness about Swachh Bharat among people.

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