

SUMMARY

Hundred and ninety three patients with burn injuries admitted to General Hospital Colombo and Lady Ridgeway Children's Hospital Colombo during 1st of May to 7th August 1994 were included in the study.

Large number of patients(23.3%) belonged to the under 5 year age group while number of patients over the age of 40 years were less. Two thirds of the patients were urban residents and 70% were from low income families(monthly income less than Rs. 3000.00)

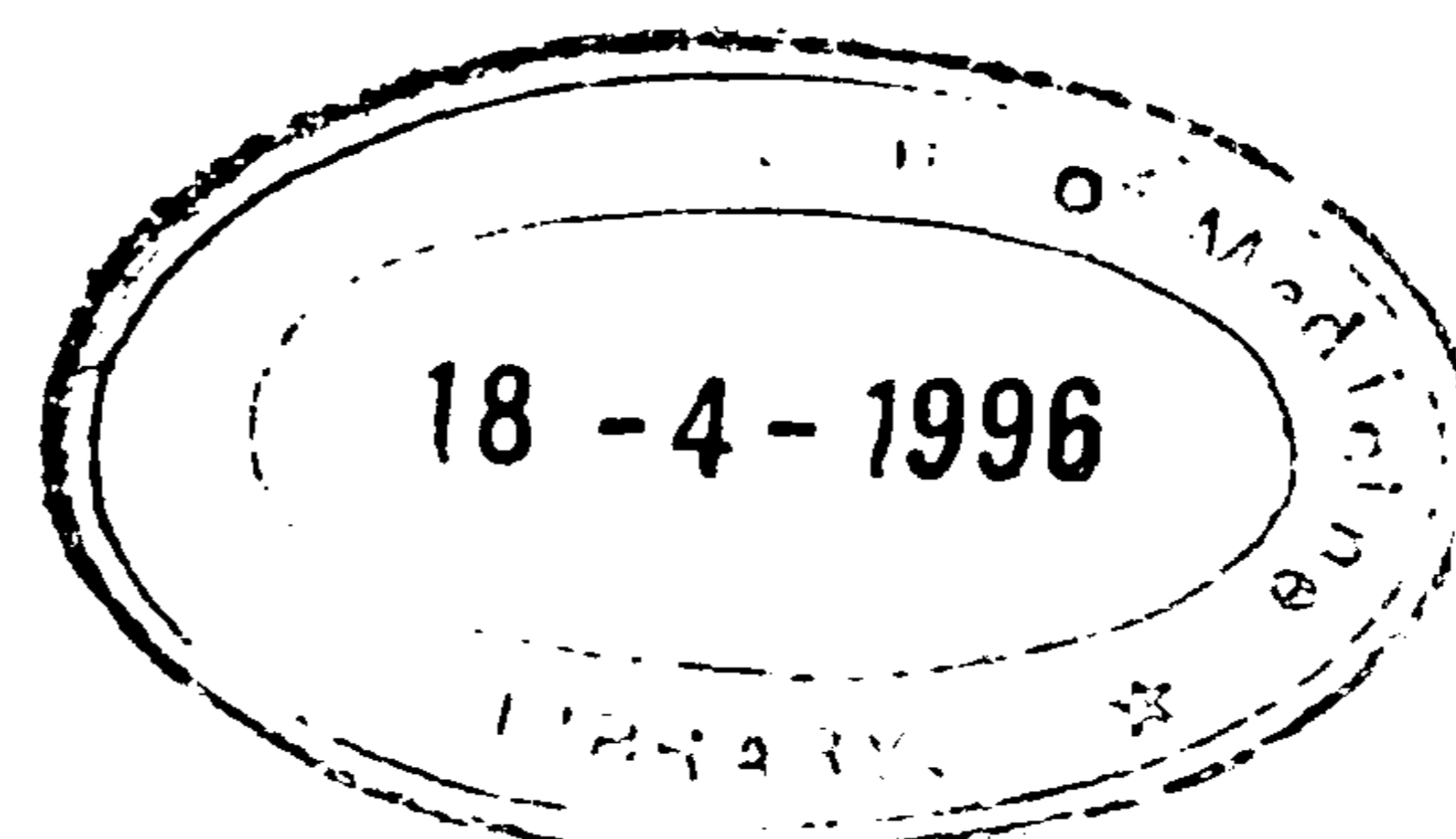
It was observed that most of the burns occurred in the domestic environment(88.6%),between 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.(59.6%),were accidental in nature(84.4%) and of the flame type(64.8%).

Majority of the patients were males(55.4%).The predominant site of injury was the anterior surface of the trunk affecting 70% of patients. A statistically significant association was observed in the distribution of type burns according to the age and sex.Scalds were the common type of burn among patients under 12 years while flame burns were commoner in over 12 year age group($p < 0.001$). Scalds,electric,contact and chemical burns were commoner in males.($p < 0.05$)

Kerosene oil bottle lamps were responsible for 56.8% of all flame burns and 87.3% of these burns were caused by bottle lamps with loose wick carriers.

Significant factors associated with a fatal outcome were age over 12 years($p < 0.05$), male gender($p < 0.05$), flame burns($p < 0.001$), burns affecting more than 30% of the body surface area($p < 0.001$) and third degree burns($p < 0.001$).

Appropriate first aid was received only by 22.2% of the sample studied.



Following recommendations were made in relation to the results of the study. general public should be educated regarding the prevention of burns and proper first aid measures. Usage of kerosene oil lamps should be discouraged, In the absence of an alternative, only safe Kerosene oil lamps with fixed wick carries should be used. Improvement of medical care for the burn patients at all levels of health care institutions is highly recommended.