

# Alcohol use is one of the major causes of head injuries in Nepal

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Patients operated for head injury, Nepal. Credit: Dr Alok Deo

Head injuries can be fatal, particularly if the assailant intentionally targets the victim to cause maximum damage. A recent study published in the Birat Journal of Health Sciences in Nepal has found that over a

third of all intentional head injuries—assaults intended to kill or incapacitate a person—were related to alcohol use.

The article, titled "Intentional Head Injury: Survivor Victim's Profile, Gender Differences and Role of Alcohol Use at Manipal Teaching Hospital, Pokhara, Nepal" by Alok Atreya, T Kanchan and BG Karmacharya, is based on research carried out among victims of physical assaults admitted at the Neurosurgery Unit of Manipal Teaching Hospital, Pokhara, Nepal in 2015.

"We carried out the study because not many studies are being conducted in neurological cases in Nepal," says Dr Alok Atreya, lead author of the article and Assistant Professor at the Department of Forensic Medicine, Nepal Medical College and Teaching Hospital, Nepal (previously Lecturer at Manipal Teaching Hospital). "We found that young males were the ones most affected by intentional head injuries."

The research found that intentional head injuries accounted for 17 percent of all head injuries during the study period. The proportion of affected males (76 percent) was over three times that of females (24 percent).

The study has established a strong correlation between [alcohol](#) use and intentional head [injury](#). "Our study and other related studies have shown that when alcohol mixes with young blood, chances of violent occurrences increase exponentially," says Dr Atreya.

The study found that 37 percent of the cases of intentional [head](#) injuries were associated with alcohol use. Blunt objects were most commonly used for assault.

The research argues that violence associated with alcohol is preventable with some tweaks in policy and programming. "Reducing availability of

alcohol and improving the environment where alcohol is sold and consumed would largely reduce intentional physical injuries under the influence of alcohol," says Dr Atreya.

**More information:** Head Injury: Survivor Victim's Profile, Gender Differences and Role of Alcohol Use at Manipal Teaching Hospital, Pokhara, Nepal by Alok Atreya, T Kanchan and BG Karmacharya is available in *Birat Journal of Health Sciences* 2017.

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