

Shark bite in a seven-year-old female: A Case Report

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Introduction

Given the increase in population in coastal cities and endemic shark populated areas it is important for the emergency medicine physician to be comfortable and informed about shark bite injuries. The first step in any patient encounter will be to assess A, B, C, D, E and complete your primary survey. This would then be followed by a detailed secondary survey and physical exam. Most shark attacks are non-lethal [1]. If the wound is extensive it may need to be cleaned, loosely approximated. All patients require antibiotics to cover for both vibrio and staph species. If there is tendon involvement, loss of tissue an orthopedist or general surgeon should be consulted for management or follow up

Images



Figure 1: Large shark bite to lower leg.

Discussion

There are multiple variables that come into play when evaluating a shark bite. Specific size, populations, and migratory patterns are measured in some species, however not all. These species include great whites, tiger, and bull sharks. Spikes in attacks along the South Carolina coast described as, “bump and go” shark attacks, have been from smaller shark species such as the black tip sharks [1]. These are often identified around man-made piers in the area and have been at the epicenter of the rise in shark bites during tourist season. The eastern United states has seen a progressive rise of shark attacks in the last 20 years as reported by the Florida Shark Research Program. This in part due to more development and population density and in part to increase water recreation activity.

Case Report

A seven-year-old female with no medical problems presents by EMS to the local trauma center emergency department with shark bite to right posterior lower leg. The young female was wading in 2 feet of water at a local beach when she was bitten by a shark approximately six feet long. This child was then taken to the operating room for exam under anesthesia and definitive management.



Figure 2: Post operative repair of shark bite.

References

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