

ABSTRACT

A Ten-Year Retrospective Study of the Epidemiological and Economic Aspects of Corrosive Substance Ingestion in Children Admitted to the BHC and UHWI (1986-1995)

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The public health impact of corrosive substance ingestion in children is significant. The study examined secondary data on corrosive ingestion in children admitted to the Bustamante Hospital for Children (BHC) and the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) during the period 1986-1995. The aim of the study was to compare the epidemiological variables and trends in children with corrosive substance ingestion and to estimate the cost burden to the health sector.

During the period 1986-1995 a total of 308 children with corrosive ingestion were admitted to the BHC and UHWI with an average of 31 children per annum. There was a significant decline in the incidence of corrosive ingestion in children over the ten- year period.

Age was identified as a major risk factor. Ninety-six percent of children studied fell into the 0-5 years age group with children in the 12-23 months age group being especially vulnerable.