

CROCS FILES: MIRACULOUS ESCAPE, EVADES CROCODILE JAW IN UNFORTUNATE ENCOUNTER.

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Introduction

Human-crocodile conflicts are examples of human-wildlife crises that negatively affect humans. They have existed for ages and will continue to persist as humans continue to co-exist alongside the species. Within recent years, the number of crocodile attacks on humans in Sabah has risen significantly, with 28 attacks (11 fatal, 17 non-fatal) reported between 2000 and 2008. Our Lahad Datu district is known to be inhabited by notorious crocodiles that inflict injuries on victims.

Case Description

A 38-year-old male, an illegal immigrant, presented to our casualty following an unfortunate event in which he was riding a motorcycle and skidded into a nearby river in Felda Sahabat Lahad Datu, with half of his thigh sunk into the murky water. While trying to evacuate himself, he experiences a heavy biting sensation over his right leg and excruciating pain. It was then he realised that a crocodile bit him, and he immediately poked the crocodile's eye. He managed to roll himself to escape the beast and immediately ran away to seek local help. A layperson applied a tourniquet and immobilized the right lower limb, and the patient was subsequently sent to our department throughout a 2.5-hours journey. Our assessment demonstrated an open right tibia-fibula fractures with no vascular injury.

Discussion

Crocodylus porosus is the only species from the family of true crocodiles, under the order of crocodylia, that is known to inhabit Sabah estuaries and swim upstream to the freshwater river as well as associated wetlands. It is an opportunistic predator that is known to attack humans, causing disabling or life-threatening injuries either from the attack itself or drowning leading to various complications.

Conclusion

Effective first aid targeting bleeding control and urgent transfer to definitive care may improve the chance of survival following a crocodile attack. The survivors of crocodile bite attacks should be managed as per advanced trauma life support and advanced life support guidelines as they do not only sustain injuries from trauma but also from possibilities of drowning and hypothermia.

Keywords

Crocodile bites, *Crocodylus porosus*, tourniquet.