Reviewer’s report

Title: Identical fracture patterns in combat vehicle blast injuries due to improvised explosive devices; a case series. Identical injury patterns in blast trauma

Version: 3 Date: 10 July 2012

Reviewer: Arul Ramasamy

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have made significant improvements to the text and the overall layout is much improved. They have removed extraneous text and focused on the injuries stated. Overall these case reports show unusual injury patterns in that identical injuries were sustained in each event.

My only concern to the manuscript lies in the discussion. The authors state 'based on the described cases, since (levels of) injuries were found that were unexpected and paired, a supplementary survey to the regular trauma work-up seems appropriate'.

It would appear to me that from severe axial loading, trauma surgeons would look for calcaneal and spinal fractures. Secondly, in these cases, the patients were all fully conscious and had isolated injuries. It does not seem to be a significant diagnostic dilemma to identify the injuries. Certainly we have learnt from managing polytrauma patients in Afghanistan, that it is essential to perform full secondary surveys on all patients to ensure that all injuries are noted. Indeed in patients who are already ventilated, some injuries may not be noticeable several weeks after injury.

In essence, this case report shows a pattern of injury one might expect from axial loading and tertiary blast injury from under-vehicle injury. The unusual element lies in the fact that casualties sustained identical injuries. Given the aims of the journal, this case report adds to the body of evidence within the literature, which is currently very limited.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests