

CERVICAL SPINE INJURY IN MAXILLOFACIAL TRAUMA - A CLINICAL STUDY

BY

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Our world has become completely mobile and relatively smaller, as scientists and engineers develop faster and more sophisticated modes of transport; and consequently trauma has emerged as one of our leading health problems. Maxillofacial trauma is no exception and injuries of the face and jaws are among those most frequently seen in the emergency rooms of hospitals. Severe facial trauma is in most instances encountered with concomittant injuries to the various body systems and traumatic morbidity is affected by the organs and systems involved. In fact, facial trauma is no longer considered as an independent entity, but both as a factor causing the morbid state, and in relation to assessment and medical intervention. One amongst the plethora of injuries associated with maxillofacial trauma is cervical spine injury. The spinal cord connects the brain to other organs in the body. If this cord is injured, connections between the brain and muscle groups or organs below the level of cord injury are damaged or severed and the part of the body involved may become functionally incommunicando. In severe cervical spine injuries with cord involvement, if the patient survives, he becomes for the rest of his life a prisoner in his own body, dependent on other people and machines for his needs. Once this damage has been done, there is almost no cure. Early diagnosis of injuries which may lead to cervical spinal cord damage is therefore of paramount importance.