

Increased Burn Center Admissions During COVID-19 Pandemic

To The Editor:

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered our personal and professional lives significantly. A majority of states are under “stay-at-home” orders and 95% of Americans are under restrictions aimed at optimizing social distancing. More than 30 states have ordered closure or partial closure of their states’ school systems.¹ This crisis has taken a toll on our financial systems, social networks, and medical systems, forcing sweeping changes that seemed improbable just months ago.

Our burn center averages between 1500 and 1700 admissions per year with peak admissions during the winter and summer months. Pediatric admissions also follow this trajectory of winter and summer peaks during traditional school breaks. We have reviewed our burn volume during this period of COVID-19 pandemic (March 1, 2020 to the present) and compared it to admissions data from the previous year. A 7% increase in total burn admissions was observed. The largest increase (35%) was seen in our pediatric population. Burn injuries in school-age children have more than doubled since the state mandated school closures (114% increase). Flame-related injuries have tripled in the pediatric population, with

contact injuries increasing by 70% and a 15% increase in scald injuries.

The burn mission continues unabated despite the COVID-19 pandemic, with an increase in observed burn admissions after the implementation of stay-at-home mandates. It is critical to ensure that resources and personnel are appropriately deployed to tackle the pandemic while also continuing to care for burn patients.

REFERENCE

1. Gostin LO, Wiley LF. Governmental public health powers during the COVID-19 pandemic: stay-at-home orders, business closures, and travel restrictions. *JAMA*. Published online April 2, 2020. doi:[10.1001/jama.2020.5460](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.5460).

Felicia N. Williams, MD, FACS

Rabia Nizamani, MD, FACS

Lori Chrisko, RN, MSN

Booker T. King, MD, FACS

Department of Surgery, University of North Carolina School of Medicine, Chapel Hill

North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center, Chapel Hill

Conflict of interest statement. The authors have no conflict of interest.

Address correspondence to Booker T. King, MD, Department of Surgery, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Email: booker_king@med.unc.edu

Reprints address: Division of Burn Surgery, Director NC Jaycee Burn Center, 4025 Burnett-Womack Building, Chapel Hill, NC 27599.

© The Author(s) 2020. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the American Burn Association. All rights reserved. For permissions, please e-mail: journals.permissions@oup.com.

doi:10.1093/jbcr/iraa112