

# Mazar-i-Sharif

Since 2007, a continuous neurosurgery emergency service has been available in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) field hospital in Mazar-e-Sharif (MeS), [Afghanistan](#). The object of a study was to assess the number and range of surgical procedures performed on the spine in the period from 2007 to 2014.

This is a retrospective analysis of the annual neurosurgical caseload statistics from July 2007 to October 2014 (92 months). The distribution of surgical urgency (emergency, delayed urgency, or elective), patient origin (ISAF, Afghan National Army, or civilian population), and underlying causes of diseases and injuries (penetrating injury, blunt injury/fracture, or degenerative disease) was analyzed. The range and pattern of diagnoses in the neurosurgical outpatient department from 2012 and 2013 were also evaluated.

A total of 341 patients underwent neurosurgical operations in the period from July 2007 to October 2014. One hundred eighty-eight (55.1%) of the 341 procedures were performed on the spine, and the majority of these surgeries were performed for degenerative diseases (127/188; 67.6%). The proportion of spinal fractures and penetrating injuries (61/188; 32.4%) increased over the study period. These spinal trauma diagnoses accounted for 80% of the cases in which patients had to undergo operations within 12 hours of presentation (n = 70 cases). Spinal surgeries were performed as an emergency in 19.8% of cases, whereas 17.3% of surgeries had delayed urgency and 62.9% were elective procedures. Of the 1026 outpatient consultations documented, 82% were related to spinal issues.

Compared to the published numbers of cases from neurosurgery units in the rest of the ISAF area, the field hospital in MeS had a considerably lower number of operations. In addition, MeS had the highest rates of both elective neurosurgical operations and Afghan civilian patients. In comparison with the field hospital in MeS, none of the other ISAF field hospitals showed such a strong concentration of degenerative spinal conditions in their surgical spectrum. Nevertheless, the changing pattern of spine-related diagnoses and surgical therapies in the current conflict represents a challenge for future training and material planning in comparable missions <sup>1)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup>

Spine surgery in the International Security Assistance Force Role 3 combat support hospital in Mazar-e-Sharif, northern Afghanistan, 2007-2014. *Neurosurg Focus*. 2018 Dec 1;45(6):E13. doi: 10.3171/2018.9.FOCUS18389. PubMed PMID: 30544323.

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