Severity of Vipera berus bites in Finland

Lapatto-Reiniluoto O (1), Grönlund J (2). 1. Finnish Poison Information Center, Helsinki, Finland; 2. Department of Anesthesiology, Turku University Hospital, Finland

Objective: To study the epidemiology of *Vipera berus* bites in the South-west part of Finland (covering the most of *Vipera berus* area) during 2000-2010.

Methods: All the patients hospitalized because of *Vipera berus* bites in Turku University Hospital (population 1/5 of Finland) were included and the data were collected from the patient records.

Results: There were 125 bites in adults and 104 in children. All the bites happened between May and October, 48% occurred in July. The median length of hospital stay was 3 days for both groups. PSS scores were higher with adults but antivenom (*ViperaTab®*) was given more often to children; 16 children vs 12 adults. Cortisone was given to 44 children and an antibiotic was started to 40 children. With adults cortisone and antibiotics were not as common. There were no complications with the antivenom. Time interval from a bite to the antivenom varied from couple of hours to even 12 hours. 93% of the patients treated with antivenom had moderate or severe symptoms at some point. None of the patients got persistent symptoms.

Conclusion: Antivenom was given more liberally to children than adults even though the PSSs were not worse with children.

![Vipera berus, black adder (Br.), huggorm (S.)](image)