

Classification System for Soft Tissue Injuries of Face: Bringing Objectiveness to Injury Severity

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Abstract : Introduction: Despite advances in trauma care, a classification system for soft tissue injuries of the face still needs to be objectively defined. Aim: To develop a classification system for soft tissue injuries of the face; that is objective, easy to remember, reproducible, universally applicable, aids in surgical management and helps to develop a structured data that can be used for future use. Material and Methods: This classification system includes those patients that need surgical management of facial injuries. Associated underlying bony fractures have been intentionally excluded. Depending upon the severity of soft tissue injury, these can be graded from 0 to IV (O-Abrasions, I-lacerations, II-Avulsion injuries with no skin loss, III-Avulsion injuries with skin loss that would need graft or flap cover, and IV-complex injuries). Anatomically, the face has been divided into three zones (Zone 1/2/3), as per aesthetic subunits. Zone 1e stands for injury of eyebrows; Zones 2 a/b/c stand for nose, upper eyelid and lower eyelid respectively; Zones 3 a/b/c stand for upper lip, lower lip and cheek respectively. Suffices R and L stand for right or left involved side, B for presence of foreign body like glass or pellets, C for extensive contamination and D for depth which can be graded as D 1/2/3 if depth is still fat, muscle or bone respectively. I is for damage to facial nerve or parotid duct. Results and conclusions: This classification system is easy to remember, clinically applicable and would help in standardization of surgical management of soft tissue injuries of face. Certain inherent limitations of this classification system are inability to classify sutured wounds, hematomas and injuries along or against Langer's lines.

Keywords : soft tissue injuries, face, avulsion, classification

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