

BURN SERVICES IN SARAWAK: A 3 YEAR REVIEW

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Introduction:

The Burn Unit in Hospital Umum Sarawak (HUS) officially started its service in 1986 which provides services for burn patients around Kuching region. It became the main referral center for burn cases for the whole state of Sarawak that required main intervention under proper care and treatment by plastic surgeons with multidisciplinary involvement. The second burn unit in Sarawak is in Hospital Bintulu, which started its service in 2016 headed by general surgery. In other main district hospitals, burn cases were managed by the general surgery team before transfer to HUS.

Aim: To describe burn services provided by the Plastic Surgery Department, HUS to other peripheral hospitals from 2020 to 2022.

Methods: This is a retrospective data collection of all burn patients admitted, which was collected from the ward census from 2020 to 2022 involving HUS, Hospital Sibul, Hospital Bintulu and Hospital Miri.

Results: From 2020 to 2022, a total of 1070 cases were admitted in the involved hospitals in the whole of Sarawak, in which HUS had 457 cases, Hospital Sibul had 199 cases, Hospital Bintulu had 248 cases, and Hospital Miri had 166 cases. Number of cases transferred to HUS were 63, while the total number of surgeries done by trained liaison medical officers at Hospital Sibul, Hospital Bintulu and Hospital Miri were 84, 123 and 49 respectively.

Conclusion: Burn injuries are frequently overlooked in terms of acute and long-term management with prolonged hospital stay, dressing, medication, multiple surgeries and long term follow up on burn sequelae. It requires specialized trained personnel to manage burns wounds and perform surgeries. Limitation and challenges, such as limited manpower and equipment in district hospitals, are the main issues faced, with organisation of Burn Awareness Program to educate the public about burn injuries with identification of risk factors and burn prevention.