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**Hospitals report spike in injuries during Junior Motocross Championships****10 May 2018**

An Australian-first study has identified a significant increase in the number of presentations to a rural hospital following the 2017 Australian Junior Motocross Championships, which were held in Horsham.

The study was conducted retrospectively based on presentations to the Wimmera Base Hospital during the event. It found that twenty-four young athletes, aged between seven and sixteen, presented with injuries to the hospital (out of a total of 340 entrants in to the championships).

Many of these cases were fractures and they most commonly occurred while jump manoeuvres were being performed.

Dr Prabhakaran, a general surgical registrar, said that despite a medical team and paramedics being on-site at the event, the number of cases that presented to the hospital was still high.

“The participants that we were getting had already been assessed, but their injuries were more severe and required medical attention beyond what could be offered on course.

“We were aware that the event was being held beforehand which was important, because the number of additional patients we saw on top of our usual workload was noticeable.”

Dr Prabhakaran said that she hoped that the research would lead to further studies being conducted, and additional consideration would be given to enhanced safety measures.

“What we’d like to highlight is that the more this sport grows the higher the likelihood of presentations, and greater injuries as a direct result from competitions.

“This study is unique as it is the only known Australian study, the only known rural study, as well as the largest known study for a single motocross championship internationally.

“Hopefully it will spur broader research and lead to reviews of equipment and course design, as well as any other practical solutions that can be implemented to make this growing sport safer.”

She stressed that the aim of the study was not to call for a future ban on similar events, but rather to create greater awareness about the risks involved and to ensure events were held as safely as possible

“Our impetus was to explore the burden that these sorts of championships have from a health perspective when they are held in a rural area or a small location.

“It is important that riders and parents are aware of the risks of the sport, especially when it is being conducted outside of a metropolitan area.”

The 2018 Australian Junior Motocross Championships will be held later this year in Penguin, Tasmania.

Dr Prabhakaran will be presenting at the upcoming Royal Australasian College of Surgeons’ 87th Annual Scientific Congress which is being held in Sydney between 7-11 May. The congress brings together some of the top surgical and medical minds from across New Zealand, Australia, and the rest of the world.

For more information about the Annual Scientific Congress please visit: <https://asc.surgeons.org/>

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RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

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