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The cost of over-treating simple pediatric torus fractures of the distal radius

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Background & Aim: It is known that torus fractures can be safely treated without casting or serial X-rays. They are common and stable injuries. This paper aims to propose an evidence based treatment algorithm, calculate the cost savings to the community and define the implications this has on practice, particularly rural and regional practitioners, ideally offering a treatment algorithm that can be employed in more remote communities, without easy access to an orthopedic service.

Methods: A retrospective case series of outpatients was undertaken. 68 patients met the inclusion criteria, 52% male, 31% aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The main outcome measure was the cost of an evidence based treatment algorithm and the potential savings of this alternative treatment pathway was calculated.

Results: The average cost for the treatment of torus fractures at this institution was \$225.40 per patient. This is in contrast to a cost of \$60.50 per patient with the suggested evidenced based protocol, resulting in a potential savings of \$164.91 per patient.

Conclusions: This study has demonstrated that by following a less invasive, evidence based treatment protocol, is not only more convenient to the patient and their family, but there is also a significant cost savings to the community. This less invasive intervention may be easily applied in regional centers without an orthopedic service.

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