

Guys! Protect your eyes!

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Men failing to protect eyes from injuries: Experts



(Image: Wikimedia Commons)

A review looking at patients attending a Melbourne hospital's emergency department with a serious eye injury shows that most of them could be prevented by proper eye protection.

Men's particular lack of eye protection while using power tools and lawn mowers, usually during routine house maintenance, were the other major factors in the injury cases say the researchers.

Dr Carmel Crock, Emergency Department (ED) director at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital said, "The common things were power tools, things like high-velocity power saws, hammering, wire either barbed wire or fencing wire that flicks back, nail guns - they are the big ones...And the people it is affecting is young males. They are in their teens and early 20s which is why it is such a tragedy, because it is preventable." The most common location for the eye injuries was near home (45.5%) followed by work (27.3%) and there were some sports accidents.

Vast majority of injuries could have been prevented

Dr. Crock looked at data for the 77 most severe cases of eye injury treated at the hospital during 2009, of about 8000 people who attend the ED with an eye injury every year. Results showed that 84% of the severe injury cases were in men, and the age group most prone to accidents was between 20 to 29 years.

Dr Crock said up to 90% of the injuries could have been prevented if the victim was instead wearing goggle-style eye protection. She said it was "not cool" but could prevent a "devastating outcome." "Safety spectacles are not enough for something that is high impact - it can still ricochet underneath - you need proper wide-vision safety goggles," she said.

Emergency departments get about 125 000 cases of eye injury every year and according to Dr. Crock public awareness is important. She said, "If you go to a do-it-yourself shop, it is amazing what you can buy and they are not required to sell you goggles...We don't sell cars without seatbelts - I'm wondering whether we are doing enough about eye injuries."

The study results were read at the annual gathering of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, which is underway in Canberra this week.

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