MEDIA RELEASE

Study highlights importance of running cold water on children’s burns

Thursday 11 May, 2017

The impact of cold running water first aid on paediatric burns has been discussed at the Annual Scientific Congress (ASC) of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) this week in Adelaide.

University of Queensland medical student Cody Frear presented research on the effects of current first-aid guidelines, which recommend the application of cold running water (CRW) for equal to or greater than 20 minutes within 3 hours of a burn injury, on clinical outcomes in paediatric burns patients.

“This is the largest paediatric burns cohort review yet undertaken on the subject of first-aid. It highlights the clinical importance of 20 minutes of CRW in the initial management of paediatric burns.

“The current first-aid guidelines are based primarily on studies involving animal models and adults,” Mr Frear said.

“The published literature on the relationship between burns first-aid and clinical outcomes in children, who are particularly vulnerable to burn injuries, is comparatively limited.

“Our study was to assess the clinical value of recommended CRW first-aid in children, and we analysed a prospectively-collected burns database of 2,246 patients who presented to the Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital in Brisbane (formerly the Royal Children’s Hospital) between June 2013 and December 2015.

“Sufficient CRW was administered in 68 per cent of cases and there was a linear correlation between adequacy of CRW and burn depth, with a multinomial regression revealing that patients with full thickness burns were 5.51 times more likely to have received suboptimal CRW than those with superficial burns.

“Adequate CRW was also associated with significantly decreased lengths of stay, as well as reduced odds of hospital admission and wound repair surgery.

“Our study reinforces the need for ongoing campaigns to increase public awareness of appropriate first-aid.”

Up to 1500 surgeons are meeting in the Adelaide Convention Centre this week for a series of workshops, discussions, Plenaries and masterclasses across a broad range of surgical issues.

About RACS

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.

www.surgeons.org

Media inquiries: Greg Meyer, Manager Communications & Advocacy

t: +61 3 9249 1263 | m: +61 429 028 933