Personal experience of a surgical resident in a catastrophic, ongoing, low resource, massive casualty environment: Experience from the frontline

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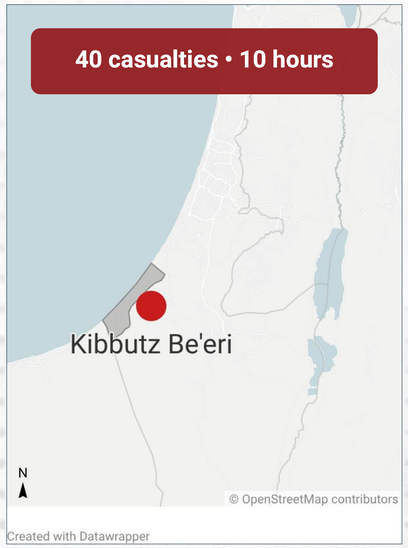
introduction

- On 07/10/2023, south-western Israel was subjected to an unprecedented military attack from the Gaza Strip resulting in approximately 1,200 deaths and 3,300 injuries. First responders were unprepared and thrust into a chaotic theatre of war treating multiple mass casualty events simultaneously. A lack of equipment and resources characterized this hostile environment. Herein is presented an account from a surgical resident tasked with operating within this austere environment.

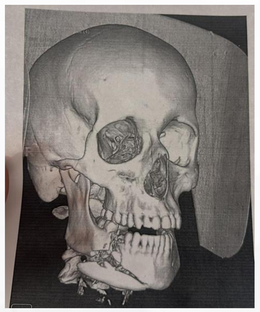
Methods

A personal account of the medical and operational outcomes of the events occurring during the 07/10/2023 conflict in kibbutz "Be'eri" focusing on the treatment, evacuation and follow-up of the 40 patients treated within 10 hours.

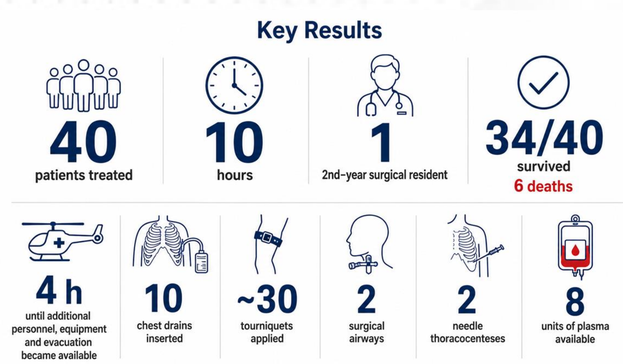


Results

- There were 40 patients treated in the first 10 hours. Additional medical personnel, equipment and means for evacuation only became available after 4 hours. The casualties included civilians and military with a variety of high-velocity gunshot and stab wounds, blunt trauma, burns, fractures and psychological injuries.



CT
Mandibular GSW with severe deformity. Managed with conservative airway control (intervention avoided) and rapid evacuation in a seated position.



Frontline Case Highlights

Patient1: Groin GSW, arterial injury, profound shock. Managed with CG packing, pressure, and immediate evacuation.

Patient 2: Axe blow with external jugular tear, deep shock. Managed with packing, plasma, and rapid vehicular evacuation.

Conclusion

- The events described above reinforce the importance of effective triage, resource allocation and appropriate usage of available supplies. Whilst practice differences between established protocols and real-world experience may occur, the experiences described above poignantly reinforce the importance of training for such situations at all levels of medical practice.

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