

## THE BLOOD THIRSTY KILLERS: SHARK ATTACK

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### INTRODUCTION:

Shark attacks are uncommon in Malaysia. Though they consist of mainly minor injuries, severe attacks can be disastrous with significant morbidity and mortality. In general, shark-attack literature is limited<sup>1</sup>. Management of such injuries is challenging as it comprises of specific injury pattern, shock, and infection especially marine *Vibrio* species.

### REPORT:

A 51-year-old healthy gentleman was attacked by a shark and sustained a non-lethal wound over his right hand. Post trauma, he washed the wound with sea water prior seeking treatment at hospital. On examination, there were two separate bite wounds over the dorsum of his right hand. He was empirically started on intravenous Amoxicillin/Clavulanic-Acid before undergoing thorough irrigation of his wound and debridement. Upon exploration, there were no tendon/neurovascular injuries. He was discharged well after completion of 72-hours of antibiotics.

Year	Area	Activity	Incident	Injury
1968	Johor	Leaving Water	Unprovoked	Head Lacerated
2009	Malacca	Feeding Fish	Unprovoked	Unknown
2011	Kedah	Snorkelling	Unprovoked	Foot Lacerated

(Retrieved from <http://www.sharkattackdata.com>)

**Table 1: Reported shark attack cases in Malaysia.**



**Figure 1: Right hand jagged wound**

### CONCLUSION:

Shark attacks create a unique pattern of limb trauma. The bites are caused by open mouth raking with serrated teeth that lead to severe slashes without much tissue loss<sup>2</sup>. In cases of major trauma, damage control surgery and meticulous resuscitation are essential. Adequate and timely antimicrobial therapy, which should cover both gram negative and positive bacteria, is crucial when dealing with such wounds as they can be quickly and critically infected from bacteria present on the shark teeth such as *Vibrio alginolyticus*, *Vibrio fluvialis*, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* and other genera<sup>2</sup>. These organisms are frequently susceptible to aminoglycosides and cephalosporins<sup>1</sup>. Urgent surgical intervention is mandatory which includes prompt and thorough debridement, haemostasis and wound lavage.

### REFERENCES:

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