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OBLITERATIVE ARTERIAL DISEASE OF LIMBS IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCE

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A high incidence of peripheral arterial disease was noticed in the central province. The significant morbidity, caused by several agonizing weeks in hospital, becoming addicted to analgesics and ultimately losing parts of the affected limb, attracted the author's attention. The study spans the period June '74 - August '76 and includes 175 patients.

70% of the patients were under 50 years of age. 7% had associated cardiac ischaemia and 2% had cerebral ischaemia. Claudication was the only presenting symptom in 8%, claudication with ulceration or ischaemia of the digits in 62%, and ulceration and ischaemia in 30%. This contrasts greatly with the pattern of arterial disease found in Europe and the USA.

A definite male preponderance (169 patients) and a high incidence of smoking (168 patients) was noticed. The femoro-popliteal segment was found to be the site of obstruction in 35% of patients. Upper limbs were affected in 31% of patients. Histology was done in a proportion of cases.