

OSHMed Magazine

Occupational Safety & Health and Medical

by



NAMIBIAN HEART WEEK HEALTH CHECKS, CPR TRAINING, AND VITAL CARDIAC AWARENESS

HIDDEN HAZARDS OF INFLAMMATION • HEALTH & SAFETY: THE BLIND SPOT OF EXPERTISE • FUN TIME - JOKE OF THE WEEK • E.M.A. WEEKLY EMERGENCY STATISTICS

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Namibian Heart Week Brings Free Health Checks, CPR Training, and Vital Cardiac Awareness to Maerua Mall



WINDHOEK – Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs)—including heart attacks, hypertension, and strokes—remain among the leading causes of premature death and chronic disability across Namibia. Often referred to as "silent killers," cardiovascular conditions frequently develop without obvious warning signs until an acute, life-

threatening cardiac event strikes at home, in the workplace, or on the road.

To combat this growing public health crisis, Maerua Mall in Windhoek is serving this week as the central hub for cardiac wellness and life-saving education as part of Namibian Heart Week. Driven by a powerful tripartite collaboration between the Namibian Heart Foundation, the E.M.A. non-profit organisation, and OSH-Med International, the initiative aims to empower the public through preventative screening, practical life-saving skills, and vital knowledge on immediate emergency response.

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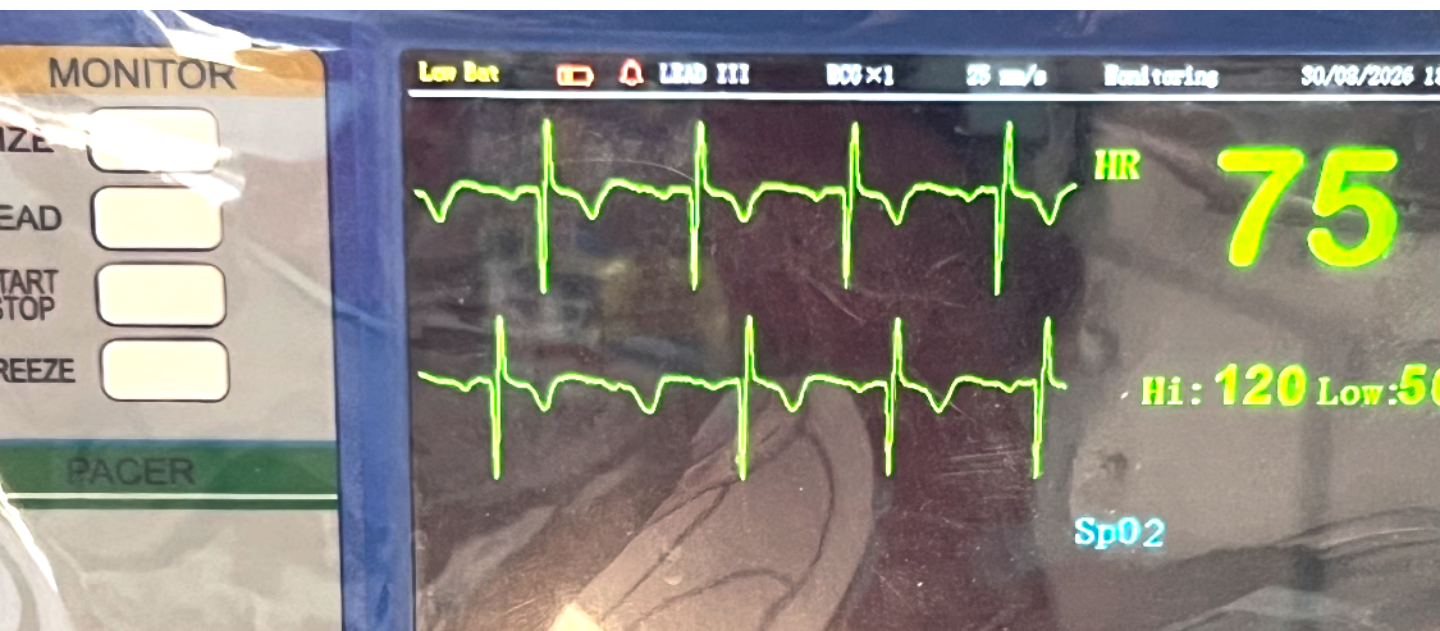
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The Power of Prevention: Unmasking the Silent Threat

In Namibia's fast-paced urban environments, modern lifestyle factors—such as sedentary work routines, high-stress levels, tobacco use, and diets heavy in salt and saturated fats—have driven a sharp rise in cardiovascular disorders among both young adults and the active workforce.

Preventative health remains the strongest defence against heart disease. High blood pressure (hypertension) and elevated blood glucose silently damage blood vessels over years, placing immense strain on the heart muscle. By prioritising early detection and routine medical checks, individuals can identify cardiac risk factors before they culminate in a debilitating stroke or fatal heart attack.

A Unified Lifeline: Collaboration at Maerua Mall

This year's Heart Week is marked by a dynamic joint venture bringing together public advocacy, occupational health expertise, and emergency medical response. The Namibian Heart Foundation has teamed up with OSH-Med International (Namibia's leading provider of Occupational Safety, Health, and medical training) and E.M.A. Rescue Service to offer free, accessible services directly to shoppers and the broader public at Maerua Mall:

- **Free Comprehensive Health Checks:** Qualified medical personnel and occupational health staff are providing free on-site screenings, including blood pressure measurements, random blood glucose testing, body mass index (BMI) assessments, and individualised cardiovascular risk



counselling.

- **Free Hands-On CPR Training:** Visitors can learn the fundamentals of bystander Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Trained instructors are guiding members of the public through hands-on chest compression techniques and basic life-support maneuvers on training manikins, equipping everyday citizens with the confidence to act during a sudden cardiac arrest.
- **Public Education on Cardiac Health:** Distributing practical guidance on heart-healthy nutrition, regular exercise habits, and smoking cessation.

"Time is Muscle": The Critical Role of Immediate Emergency Services

When a heart attack occurs, a coronary artery becomes blocked, starving heart muscle of oxygen-rich blood. Every minute of delay leads to progressive, irreversible damage to the heart tissue—a clinical reality captured by the medical maxim: *"Time is muscle."*

In the event of a suspected cardiac arrest or acute myocardial infarction, immediate action is paramount:

1. **Immediate Recognition:** Identifying classic warning signs—such as severe, crushing chest pain or

pressure radiating to the left arm, jaw, neck, or back; sudden shortness of breath; profuse cold sweating; dizziness; or sudden unexplained nausea.

2. **Early Bystander CPR:** If a person collapses and stops breathing normally, starting immediate chest compressions keeps oxygenated blood circulating to the brain and vital organs until professional medical help arrives.
3. **Rapid Emergency Medical Dispatch:** Calling for advanced pre-hospital medical care immediately.

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equipment—including 12-lead Electrocardiograms (ECGs), manual defibrillators, oxygen delivery systems, and emergency cardiovascular medications—to initiate advanced cardiac life support on scene and stabilise patients during rapid transport to coronary care units.

Take Charge of Your Heart Health Today

A heart-healthy community starts with individual awareness and the collective readiness to respond in a crisis. The public

is encouraged to visit the Namibian Heart Week stand at Maerua Mall to take advantage of the free health screenings, learn life-saving CPR skills, and speak directly with health professionals.

In the event that you, a colleague, or a loved one experience sudden chest pain, severe breathing distress, or a cardiac emergency anywhere in Namibia:

- **Call the E.M.A. Emergency Number immediately at 9112.**

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Understanding the Causes, Warning Signs, and Hidden Hazards of Inflammation

Whether it is a swollen ankle after tripping on a gravel path, a throbbing red finger from an acacia thorn puncture, or the invisible cellular stress behind cardiovascular disease, inflammation touches every facet of human health. It is one of the body's most essential biological defence mechanisms, yet when uncontrolled, it transforms into a primary driver of chronic illness and tissue destruction.

What are the symptoms of acute and chronic inflammation?

Acute inflammation may cause:



Flushed skin at the site of the injury



Pain or tenderness



Swelling



Heat

As detailed in an extensive medical analysis, understanding the biological mechanisms of inflammation—how it begins, how it resolves, and why it sometimes spirals out of control—is

fundamental to both daily first aid and long-term health management.

In Namibia's unique operating landscape, where industrial workforces, agricultural labourers, and urban professionals face diverse physical risks and rising lifestyle diseases, recognising the signs of acute and chronic inflammation is vital for workplace safety and personal well-being.

What Is Inflammation? The Body's Emergency Defence Network

At its core, inflammation is an organised immunological response to danger. Whenever the body detects tissue injury, physical trauma, invading pathogens (bacteria, viruses, fungi), toxic chemicals, or foreign particles, the immune system triggers a rapid defence protocol.

Specialised white blood cells and signalling chemicals (such as histamines, prostaglandins, and cytokines) rush to the affected site. Blood vessels dilate to increase blood flow, while vascular walls become more permeable to allow immune cells, protective antibodies, and fluid to enter the damaged tissue to neutralise the threat and initiate repair.

The Five Classic Signs of Acute Inflammation

Medical practitioners have recognised the



five cardinal signs of acute inflammation for centuries. Recognising them helps first-aiders and safety officers distinguish between normal healing and escalating complications:

- **Redness (*Rubour*):** Caused by the dilation of local blood vessels and a surge in blood flow to the injured tissue.
- **Heat (*Calour*):** The increased blood circulation carries warm, core body blood directly to the surface of the affected area.
- **Swelling (*Tumour*):** Fluid, proteins, and white blood cells leak from expanded capillaries into the surrounding tissue spaces.
- **Pain (*Dolour*):** Chemical mediators and physical pressure from the swelling irritate local pain receptors, signalling the brain to protect the injured body part.
- **Loss of Function (*Functio Laesa*):** Pain and severe swelling temporarily restrict the normal movement or operation of the affected joint, muscle, or organ.

Acute vs. Chronic: When the Defence Becomes the Disease

Inflammation exists in two distinct forms with vastly different consequences for the human body:

1. Acute Inflammation (The Short-Term Protector)

Acute inflammation develops rapidly—often within minutes or hours of an injury or infection. It serves a clear, targeted purpose: destroy the pathogen, isolate damaged cells, and trigger tissue regeneration. Once the threat is eliminated, the body releases anti-inflammatory signals to halt the reaction. Common Namibian workplace examples include minor burns, insect stings, cuts sustained in workshops, or acute joint sprains.

2. Chronic Inflammation (The Silent Health Threat)

When an inflammatory response fails to shut down, it becomes chronic. Unlike acute

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inflammation, chronic inflammation often operates silently beneath the surface with no obvious redness or immediate pain. Over months and years, persistent low-grade inflammatory chemicals slowly erode healthy cells, blood vessels, and internal organs.

In Namibia, chronic inflammation is heavily fuelled by modern lifestyle challenges:

- Diets high in refined sugars, processed meats, and trans fats.
- Physical inactivity and sedentary office routines.

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The advertisement features a background image of a vast, open landscape with rolling hills under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on this image. At the top, there is a logo for ATA OSH-Med International, which includes a red cross symbol and the text 'ATA OSH-Med International' in white and red. Below the logo, the tagline 'Your Future in Healthcare.' is written in a smaller font. The main headline 'MEDICAL CARE FOR YOU' is in large, bold, white capital letters. Below this, the phrase 'here & everywhere' is written in a large, bold, white font. At the bottom, the website 'www.osh-med.pro/medical-services' and the phone number '+264 61 302 931' are listed, along with the email address 'ata@osh-med.pro'.

- Chronic psychological stress and poor sleep hygiene.
- Tobacco use, heavy alcohol consumption, and uncontrolled obesity.

Medical research directly connects chronic systemic inflammation to the development of type 2 diabetes, atherosclerosis (arterial plaque buildup), rheumatoid arthritis, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, and certain cancers.

Prevention & Practical First Aid in the Namibian Environment

Managing inflammation effectively requires proactive workplace health measures and sensible personal habits:

- **Clean and Dress Wounds Immediately:** Never ignore minor cuts or abrasions incurred in dusty or outdoor environments. Wash with clean water, apply antiseptic, and cover with a sterile dressing to prevent localised bacterial inflammation from progressing.
- **Apply the P.R.I.C.E. Principle for Acute Sprains:** For joint or soft-tissue injuries, utilise **Protect**, **Rest**, **Ice** (cold therapy to limit excessive swelling), **Compression**, and **Elevation**.
- **Adopt an Anti-Inflammatory Lifestyle:** Emphasise whole, unprocessed foods rich in antioxidants (such as leafy greens,



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- legumes, nuts, and oily fish), engage in regular aerobic exercise, and quit smoking.
- **Maintain Workplace Ergonomics:** Prevent chronic repetitive-strain inflammation in tendons and joints (e.g., tendinitis, carpal tunnel) by ensuring ergonomic workstation setups and structured stretch intervals.

Warning Signs: When Inflammation Escalates to Sepsis

While localised inflammation is a normal healing process, it can sometimes escape local control and spread into the bloodstream—a medical catastrophe known as **sepsis** (blood poisoning) or severe cellulitis.

Seek immediate emergency medical intervention if you observe:

- A red streak spreading outward from a wound toward the heart (lymphangitis).
- High fever, severe chills, and rapid, shallow breathing.
- Sudden confusion, extreme dizziness, or a severe drop in blood pressure.
- Rapidly worsening, intense pain and swelling that extends far beyond the original injury site.

In any acute medical crisis or spreading systemic infection:

- **Call the E.M.A. Emergency Number immediately at 9112.**

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In Namibia, factors such as HIV co-infection, diabetes, malnutrition, heavy tobacco use, and occupational lung conditions (such as silicosis from long-term mining dust exposure) significantly increase the risk of latent infections converting into active disease.

Recognising the Early Warning Signs

Early diagnosis of active TB is critical to breaking the chain of community and workplace transmission.

Safety officers, wellness coordinators, and family members should watch for these classic symptoms:

- **Persistent Cough:** A productive cough lasting **more than two to three weeks**, which does not improve with standard antibiotics.

- **Haemoptysis:** Coughing up blood or rust-coloured sputum.
- **Night Sweats:** Waking up drenched in heavy sweat, often requiring a change of clothes or bedding.
- **Unexplained Weight Loss:** Gradual, noticeable loss of body weight and appetite (the hallmark of "consumption").
- **Low-Grade Fever & Chronic Fatigue:** Persistent afternoon fever, chills, and unrelenting exhaustion.

Workplace OSH: Prevention and Medical Surveillance

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Health & Safety - The Blind Spot of Expertise: Why Seasoned Artisans Face Severe Risks During Unplanned Maintenance



*In occupational health and safety, experience is universally regarded as a company's strongest defence. Seasoned machine operators, master artisans, and veteran safety supervisors possess years of situational awareness, refined technical skills, and an intimate understanding of plant operations. Yet, occupational incident investigations consistently reveal a troubling phenomenon: **highly experienced personnel are frequently the victims of severe, life-altering injuries during non-routine tasks.***

As examined in a recent safety analysis published by *Occupational Health & Safety*, tenure on the job does not automatically inoculate a worker against catastrophic risk. When work departs from standard,

predictable daily cycles, decades of experience can inadvertently transform into cognitive blind spots.

Across Namibia's industrial landscape—from heavy processing plants in the Erongo mining belt to maritime freight operations in Walvis Bay and complex construction builds in Windhoek—understanding the psychology behind the "experience trap" during non-routine work is essential for preventing fatal workplace incidents.

The Psychology of the Experience Trap

Why does a technician with twenty years of unblemished service suddenly bypass a safety guard, enter a confined space without

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An advertisement for OSH-Med international. The background is a grayscale image of industrial equipment, including cranes and structures. The text is overlaid on this image. At the top left, the logo for OSH-Med international is displayed, with 'OSH-Med' in blue and 'international' in red. Below the logo, the text 'SERVICE • TRAINING • EXCELLENCE' is written in small letters. In the center, the words 'OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH TRAINING' are written in large, bold, blue capital letters. Below this, there is a list of services: 'OSH Officer', 'OSH Supervisor', 'OSH Representative', and 'and more', each preceded by a blue diamond symbol. At the bottom, the locations 'Windhoek • Ongwediva • Walvis Bay' and the website 'www.osh-med.pro' are listed in blue text.



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atmospheric testing, or attempt to unjam machinery while it remains energised?

The breakdown rarely stems from a lack of technical knowledge. Instead, it is driven by deeply ingrained cognitive biases:

- **Heuristic Over-Reliance (Pattern Matching):** Experienced workers rely heavily on mental shortcuts (heuristics) developed over thousands of hours of routine work. When presented with an abnormal breakdown or unfamiliar task, their brain attempts to force the problem into a familiar pattern, blinding them to subtle, dangerous deviations in the operating environment.
- **The Normalisation of Deviance:** If an artisan took a minor shortcut five years ago to complete an urgent repair and nothing bad happened, the brain registers that action as safe. Over time, taking unverified shortcuts

during unexpected breakdowns becomes standard operating behaviour.

- **The Illusion of Control and Optimism Bias:** Long-serving employees develop immense confidence in their ability to react quickly to mechanical failures. They believe their reflexes and instinct will protect them if a component shifts or hydraulic pressure discharges, severely underestimating the speed of mechanical energy.
- **The Burden of Responsibility:** Senior workers often feel immense internal and external pressure to resolve unexpected stoppages quickly. In an effort to keep production moving and demonstrate problem-solving capability, they may prioritise rapid execution over deliberate pre-task hazard analysis.

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Non-Routine Danger Zones Across Namibia

Non-routine tasks are defined as operations that are performed infrequently, lack a standardised step-by-step procedure, or occur under unplanned conditions (such as emergency maintenance or equipment modifications).

In Namibia, non-routine hazards frequently occur across several high-risk sectors:

- **Mining & Ore Processing:** Unblocking jammed ore chutes, repairing conveyor belts during unplanned stoppages, or replacing heavy liner plates in ball mills during plant turnarounds.
- **Maritime & Cold Storage (Walvis Bay / Lüderitz):** Emergency maintenance on ammonia refrigeration compressors, servicing container crane spreader bars under tight vessel turnaround schedules, or modifying vessel deck structures.
- **Commercial Construction & Civil Engineering:** Modifying specialised scaffolding mid-project, troubleshooting high-voltage electrical distribution panels during power surges, or repositioning heavy plant machinery in confined urban spaces.
- **Agriculture & Agro-Processing:** Repairing combine harvesters, threshers, or hydraulic balers in remote field settings where dedicated workshop tools and isolation lockouts

are not readily available.

The Core Risk: Non-routine tasks inherently involve uncontrolled stored energy (hydraulic, pneumatic, electrical, or gravitational) and fluctuating environmental variables that standard operating procedures (SOPs) do not cover.



Strategic Controls: Safeguarding Unplanned Operations

Protecting experienced personnel during non-routine work requires moving beyond basic safety inductions and implementing structured risk controls:

1. Mandatory Non-Routine Job Hazard Analysis (JHA)

Whenever a task falls outside standard operating parameters, work must pause for a formal Job Hazard Analysis. Experienced artisans must be paired with safety representatives to physically walk through the task, map every energy source, and document specific control measures before any tool touches the equipment.



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2. Strict Lockout, Tag-out, and Tryout (LOTOTO)

Zero-energy verification must be non-negotiable. Experienced workers must never assume a system is dead because an isolator switch was flipped; they must actively test and attempt to restart the equipment (the "Tryout" step) to verify that zero residual kinetic, thermal, or pressure energy remains.

3. Institutionalising Dynamic "Take 5" Assessments

Equip teams with the habit of dynamic

micro-risk assessments. If conditions change during a repair—such as fading daylight, worsening wind conditions, or discovering unexpected mechanical damage—workers must immediately reassess the risk rather than pushing through.

4. Cultivating Uncompromising "Stop-Work" Empowerment

Site culture must empower even the most junior assistant to challenge a veteran supervisor if a safety protocol is skipped during a non-routine task. Safety is collective, and peer verification saves lives.

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Specialised OSH Services Include:

- **Accredited Risk Assessment Training:** Hands-on training in Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA), Job Hazard Analysis (JHA), and Dynamic Risk



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Profiling to train workers to recognise hidden hazards in unusual work scenarios.

- **Approved Inspection Authority:** Statutory legal compliance audits, hazardous substance surveys, and workplace safety system reviews registered with the Ministry of Labour.
- **Behavioural Safety & Leadership Programs:** Specialised workshops designed to address cognitive complacency, empower stop-work authority, and reinforce safety culture among supervisors and senior artisans.



- **HSE & Medical Staffing Solutions:** Through **ATA | OSH - Med International**, organisations can access experienced Safety Officers, HSE Managers, and turnkey onsite medical clinic staffing tailored to remote mine sites, construction projects, and industrial plants across

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With state-of-the-art training centres strategically situated in **Windhoek**, **Walvis Bay**, and **Ongwediva**, OSH-Med International delivers world-class safety training directly to your workforce.

When Unforeseen Hazards Strike

Even with rigorous risk controls, non-routine industrial tasks carry inherent unpredictability. When mechanical entrapment, severe crush trauma, high-voltage electrocution, or sudden chemical exposure occurs, the speed and competence of pre-hospital emergency medical care determine the outcome.

E.M.A. Rescue Service operates 24/7 with specialised Advanced Life Support (ALS) trauma paramedics, mobile intensive care equipment, and rapid extraction capabilities to stabilise severely injured workers on scene and coordinate immediate transport to specialised trauma units.

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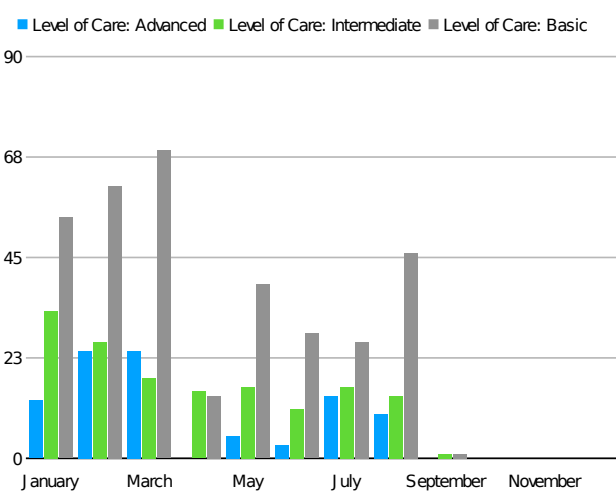
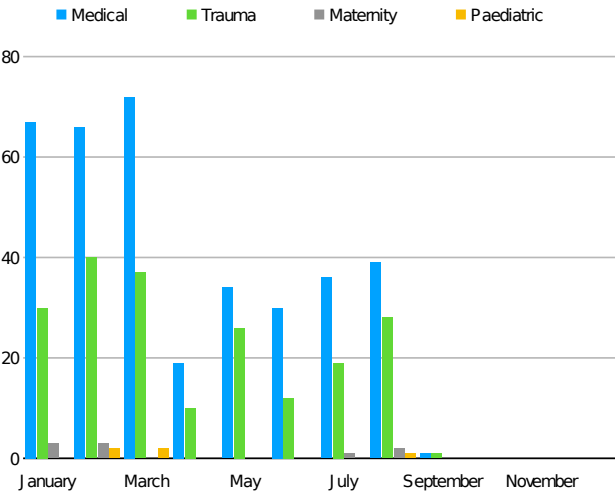
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updated 4.9.2026

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	Medical	Trauma	Maternity	Paediatric	Level of Care: Advanced	Level of Care: Intermediate	Level of Care: Basic
January	67	30	3	0	13	33	54
February	66	40	3	2	24	26	61
March	72	37	0	2	24	18	69
April	19	10	0	0	0	15	14
May	34	26	0	0	5	16	39
June	30	12	0	0	3	11	28
July	36	19	1	0	14	16	26
August	39	28	2	1	10	14	46
September	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
October	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total per annum	364	203	9	5	93	150	338
Total	581				581		



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Emergency Call



Important information to give:

- **Where** is the emergency?
- **What** happened?
- **What** kind of injuries?
- **How many** injured person
- **Waiting** for further question

Emergency Numbers:

Ambulance services:

E.M.A. Rescue Service

9112

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Windhoek

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