

# *The outcomes of children with cerebral palsy and upper airways obstruction at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital*

**Student Name: Reneva Petersen**

**Supervisor: Dr Springer**

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**Background:** The aim of this study was to describe the prevalence and outcomes of a cohort of children with cerebral palsy and upper airways obstruction admitted over a five-year period to a single institution in Cape Town, South Africa.

**Methods:** A retrospective cohort study was conducted of all children between the ages of 2 and 18 years admitted with cerebral palsy during the study period. Information about the classification and severity of cerebral palsy, investigation and management of upper airways obstruction and patient outcomes were collected.

**Results:** Three hundred and thirty children with cerebral palsy were admitted over the five-year period. The prevalence of UAO in the cohort during the study period was 8.8% (n=29). The median age on admission of children with UAO was four years. (IQR: 2, 6) Six (20.7%) children with upper airways obstruction died during the study period as compared to 30 (9%) children without upper airways obstruction. Feeding complications and severe physical disability were found to be associated with upper airways obstruction (p=0.0000) as well as study mortality (p=0.0004)

**Significance:** This report highlights the contribution of UAO to respiratory compromise in children with cerebral palsy.

