Introduction
Botswana, the size of France and a scarce population of 2 million, has changed from one of the poorest countries, to a middle income country. There is a lack of epidemiological studies in persons with spinal cord injury (SCI) from low and middle income countries.

Aim
To describe the epidemiology of TSCI in Botswana with a specific focus on RTC.

Results
- 49 persons with TSCI were included
- 71% were males
- Mean age was 33 years, range 4-81
- Tetraplegia was more common than paraplegia (59/41%)

Etiology
- RTC was the primary cause of TSCI
- Assault was the second most common cause, mainly due to stabbing
- Falls were the third most common cause, mainly work related

Clinical characteristics
- 35 patients sustained a vertebral fracture
- 30 patients underwent spinal surgery
- Mean time between injury and surgery was 13.7 days; 11 days for men and 19 days for women

Mortality
- In-hospital mortality for newly injured was 20%
- Time of survival was 2-50 days
- All except one had a tetraplegia

Conclusions
- Road traffic crashes (RTC) were the primary cause for a traumatic spinal cord injury (TSCI), mainly due to burst tire
- Tetraplegia was more common than paraplegia
- In-hospital mortality was high

This study contributes to new knowledge that can be of importance for promoting prevention and to continue to improve specialized care and rehabilitation of TSCI in Botswana and other low and middle income countries.