Background and Aim Injury due to foreign body (FB) aspiration and/or ingestion is a common and serious pediatric emergency. FB injury (FBI) most commonly occurs in children less than six years, and the incidence of FBI has increased in recent years. The aim of the present study was to evaluate and compare the characteristics of FBI due to ingestion and aspiration.

Methods Data from who were hospitalized for FB ingestion and/or aspiration and underwent rigid bronchoscopy and esophagoscopy from 2008–2011 were retrospectively evaluated. FB in the upper aerodigestive tract (ADT) was evaluated with respect to the characteristics of patients, clinical presentation, management strategy, the outcome, and features of FB.

Results A total of 192 patients admitted for FB ingestion or aspiration in the pediatric surgery department were evaluated. The mean age was 40.97±55.73 months. The majority of patients were fewer than four years of age. FB were mainly located in the upper esophagus for ingested FB 60.8 %, while for aspiration 45% of FB were in the main right bronchus. A total of four patients died. The hospitalization period of patients admitted for FB aspiration was longer than that of patients with FB ingestion. Surgery was performed in four patients. The most commonly ingested FB were coins, while seeds were the most commonly aspirated.

Conclusion Prevention is the key to dealing with FBI. Since the frequency of foreign bodies is higher in under-developed countries, education of parents regarding the dangers and prevention of aspiration and ingestion is important.