Abstract
Executive Summary The intensity of human-elephant conflict is fast growing in tropical and subtropical countries. Why such a sudden increase in human and wildlife conflict? This question is not because researchers have become more interested but because people want to know the reason for this human and wildlife conflict and what kind of solutions can be mitigated to solve this life hazardous conflict. The main purpose of my research was to record the level of human and elephant conflict in Bangladesh, has it been increasing gradually or been stable during the years 1972 to 2012? In addition, I wanted to evaluate the intensity of the conflict in relation to regions, locations, occupation of victims, time of the day, sex and age of the victims. Number of attacks gradually increased from 2000 to 2012. Before 2000 human and elephant conflict intensity was under control but after this year the number of attacks increased yearly. Overexploited forest resources, has explored more fragmented elephant habitats, out broken the land price and displaced more people. These are the fundamental causes of human and elephant conflict after 2000. Furthermore, lack of alternative livelihood opportunities near forests, corruption by forest staff and officers, weak forest and wildlife management laws are all indirectly induced to soar up the intensity of the conflict between people living close to forests and wild elephants. The conflict intensity rate was different between the Northwestern and Southeastern regions of Bangladesh due to different topography, location and size. Since the Southeastern region is very large and hillier than the Northwestern region, the elephant infestation rate was higher in this region. The most significant numbers of causalities happened during the winter and rainy season due to the cropping season. A significant higher number of deaths and injuries occurred during the night and early morning because elephant are more active due to their nocturnal behavior. Farmer was facing a higher rate of attacks than other occupations, and those living close to forests. A significant higher number of attacks occurred at forest edges than other locations. Male experienced more attacks than females and older age groups more attacks than other age groups. Moreover, number of attacks was higher by elephants in groups than by single elephants. Group attacks were most frequent in settlements and crop fields whereas single attacks occurred inside forests. During attacks, elephants mostly used both the leg and the trunk. Conflict related injuries were the main responsibility for elephant deaths.
We assessed data on human fatalities and injuries obtained from the Regional Forest Directorates (RFDs) and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC). The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) implemented guidelines for relief payments for wildlife-related losses in 2006 (with an amendment in 2015). Understanding patterns of human-wildlife conflict and identifying the underlying causes are an important component of conservation biology. The high frequency of elephant-human conflicts in farmlands and homes in the dry season (December) (Fig 5c) is associated with the crop harvesting months. This finding is similar to those of other studies in Nepal and India [16,32,38].