

The need for a European Injury Data Clearing House



Injury prevention needs data – not only about the size of the problem but also about groups at risk and external causes. The recent report "Injuries in the European Union" and the IDB Public Access are an exemplary first attempt to make this kind of data available at EU level. Naturally, this attempt is still fragmentary and far from perfect – indeed a proper reflection of the current situation of injury surveillance in the EU.

On the one hand, the report impressively puts the available injury data sources into "a comprehensive view" about the injury situation in the EU-25: Specifics about external causes of injuries from the "sectoral" data sources, like the IDB on home and leisure accidents, are combined with the injury chapters from general mortality and morbidity data sources.

On the other hand, the report also indicates how difficult it still is to compile such an overview and how much work still needs to be done – not only to harmonize data collection, but also to harmonize the process of aggregation of national data between and even within the various international data providers like Eurostat, EC DGs or WHO.

The difficulties to obtain comparable data in the EU for all sectors of injury prevention and for all relevant levels of severity have caused DG Sanco to call for a common information system on accidents and injuries in its recent Communication to the Council of Health Ministers. The aim of such a "European Injury Data Clearing House" is "...to provide all stakeholders with the best available information about the magnitude of the injury problem including high-risk population groups, major risk determinants and risks linked to consumer products and services." The extended IDB for all injuries must certainly be considered a core element of such an "Injury Data Clearing House" for which EuroSafe offers its expertise and its services.

*Rupert Kisser, Chairman EuroSafe,
Austrian Road Safety Board, Vienna*

Also in this Issue:

The work of the IDB Coding Helpdesk
IDB Incidence rates – a Task Force challenge

2

Injuries in the European Union at one glance

3

Cyprus in the IDB Partner Spotlight

4

The IDB Network in the new European Member States

Improving the Consumer Protection dimension of the European Injury Database (IDB)

The IDB provides access to a huge number of product and service related accidents in the EU. Currently, every year about 200,000 cases from 50 hospitals in a number of Member States are added to the IDB. However, there are challenges to meet the needs of Consumer Protection. The importance of sound data as a basis for consumer policy in preventing accidents caused by consumer products and accidents during services is stressed in the Consumer Policy Strategy 2002-2006. The need to improve the availability and quality of data for accidents during services was identified as a priority in the Commission Communication and endorsed by the Council of Ministers in December 2003.

In a feasibility study tendered by DG Sanco various methodological innovations are tested in order to improve the IDB as a knowledge base for the safety of products and services. The Consumer Safety Institute (CSI) in the Netherlands conducts this study in collaboration with some of Europe's leading organisations in injury surveillance and injury research in order:

- To develop a methodology to select the most dangerous products and the most unsafe service related activities by means of IDB data
- To conduct a quantitative and qualitative analysis of a number of relatively dangerous to products and relatively unsafe services based on available IDB data
- To define precisely the contents of additional data elements/codes/questions for the IDB coding manual or additional data collection procedures
- To review and compare the different options for collecting additional product and service safety information via the IDB in the future (including the costs involved)

By the end of this year the experts will come up with realistic scenarios for improving the existing IDB information on product and service related injuries – which will hopefully pave the way for a re-engagement of DG Consumer Protection in the IDB.

Saakje Mulder, Research Director, Consumer Safety Institute, Amsterdam



EU Injury Database

IDB - a web database for home and leisure accidents in Europe

The work of the IDB Coding Helpdesk

One of the major goals within the IDB Project is to support the IDB – Network in the implementation and maintenance of their national AI-data collection systems. For that purpose, the IDB – Coding Helpdesk was established with the aim to provide all key-documents (Coding Manual, Coding applications, Coding Training tools) and to offer support for specific coding queries reported by the national coders. The IDB Coding Helpdesk is not only a Clearing House for all IDB Coding related issues but it is also the interface for the IDB Coding Group (Birthe Frimodt-Möller, Monika Moises, Saakje Mulder, Janis Misins, Desmond O'Mahony, Tony Fitzgerald and Eileen Williamson), The major function of the IDB Coding Helpdesk is to co-ordinate responses to specific coding issues or queries encountered by National Data Administrators.

All coding related queries can consistently be sent to the IDB Helpdesk exclusively at IDBHelpdesk@iol.ie. If the problem, raised by the NDA can be solved by consulting the IDB key documents: the IDB Coding Manual, the IDB Training

Guide or the IDB Coding Standard, the Helpdesk solves the problem directly. The Helpdesk responds as soon as possible to the query with a recommendation of where to consult the appropriate quality tool. In complicated cases the IDB Coding Group is consulted. The recommendations from the experts are then agreed with the group within one month. After successful clearing, the Helpdesk notifies all members of the Coding Group and the NDA who initiated the query of the final decision which is then included in the Query Database. This may be viewed at www.nsrfl.ie. If the coding problem results in modifications of the IDB Coding Manual, it is cleared and stored at the Helpdesk for the next revision of the Manual.

IDB Helpdesk is active, ready and willing to deal with all IDB Injury Database coding related issues.

Eileen Williamson, Coordinator IDB Coding Helpdesk, National Suicide Research Foundation, Ireland

IDB Incidence rates – a Task Force challenge

IDB data is collected in accident & emergency units of a limited number of hospitals of a country. In the year 2002 a formal procedure was implemented by the Verona Local Health Unit, Italy (ULSS 20) to make IDB incidence rates available in the central database and to allow for a formal comparison of the rates across countries.

To achieve the estimation of the national incidence rates, two methods were used by the national IDB administrators: a method based on the number of cases and a method based on the allocated population. For instance: Extrapolation by cases is applied in Austria and yields an incidence rate of 72 hospital treated Home and Leisure Accidents for the year 2004. Extrapolation by population is applied in Denmark and yields an incidence rate of 82, also for 2004.

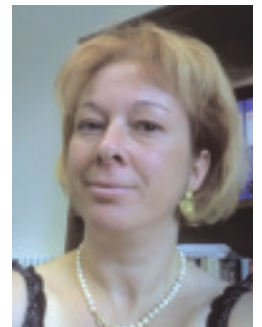
What does this difference tell us? The statistical significance of the difference can be easily assessed by first standardizing the rates, removing the sex and age effects, and then testing for differences in the incidence rates; however the actual validity of the difference is more difficult to judge and its interpretation even more challenging. Questions arise such as if a uniform definition of the population at risk was used. Possible systematic differences have to be considered when interpreting the incidence rates across countries, e.g.

- How representative are the IDB hospitals in terms of the investigated injuries?
- Are there differences in the national health care systems that can explain the difference in incidence rates?
- Can we use special indicators for country comparison that are less sensitive to these differences?

This is where the IDB Task Force comes into the picture: The Task Force - Robert Bauer, Nick Dessypris, Gianmarco Pagani, and Baltazar Nunes, under the lead of Nadia Minicuci - is evaluating the current methods, assessing possible biases, will come up with "recommended procedures" and provide an interpretation guide for the IDB user. A first draft has been already posted at the IDB home page.

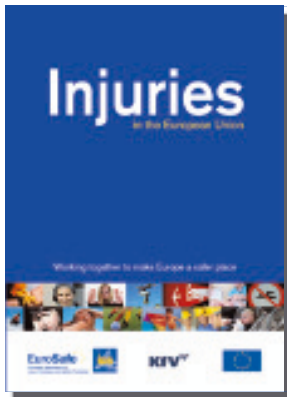
The IDB has significantly improved through the implementation of the population at risk, allowing for the formal comparison of IDB incidence rates between countries. This comparison has to be interpreted with caution and with consultation of other data sources as a back up for any conclusion – needless to say that this recommendation applies not specifically to the IDB but to all inter-national data sources.

Nadia Minicuci, Coordinator IDB Population Task Force, National Council Research (CNR), Padua, Italy



Injuries in the European Union at one glance

It is not easy to get an overview of the burden of injuries in the EU as a diversity of data source and data collection systems exist. This diversity is reflected in the different responsibilities in regard to the prevention of injuries. Traffic injuries are characteristically attributed to the transport sector, the prevention of work place injuries lies often in the hands of social insurance boards whereas the prevention of home and leisure injuries (in fact the biggest share of all injuries) falls into the responsibility of the public health and consumer protection sector.



The new report on "Injuries in the European Union" aims to combine most of the available injury data and statistics to give a comprehensive view on injuries in the EU at one glance.

One chapter focuses specifically on the analysis of the data on hospital treated home and leisure injuries as currently available in the EU Injury Database. The report represents one of the main deliverables of the current IDB project (Work Plan 2003 of the Public Health Programme) and has been compiled by the Austrian Road Safety Board, Department Home, Leisure & Sports, in close cooperation with EuroSafe, the newly founded European Association for Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion.

Target groups of the report

- Injury prevention community (experts, researchers, campaigners,..)
- Media
- Policy makers
- IDB Network
- Public Health and Consumer Protection Authorities

The IDB data of the years 2002 to 2004 - based on the IDB V2000 Coding Manual – was analysed.

The report is a first attempt to disseminate key figures on injuries in the EU in a periodic way in order to integrate injuries more prominently in the overall EC health reporting.

It is planned in the context of the SafeStrat project (PHP 2005) by EuroSafe to complement this yearly reporting through more regular fact sheets, press releases and on demand dossiers on current injury issues.

The report "Injuries in the European Union" will be published at the First European Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion in Vienna, and will be made available for download at the IDB Homepage and Public Access:

Login at <https://wegbate.cec.eu.int> !

Nina Zimmermann, Robert Bauer, IDB Coordination Team, Austrian Road Safety Board, Vienna

Some examples:

- Activity at the time of injury
One third of all home and leisure injuries occur in the course of playing and leisure activity.

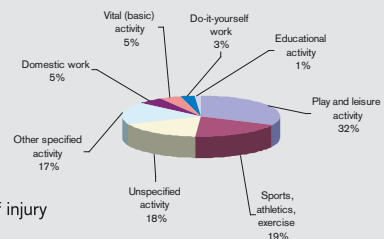


Fig.1 Activity at the time of injury

- Place of occurrence and age groups
Most injuries occur in the residential area (42%). Especially senior citizens (60+) are vulnerable to injuries at home.

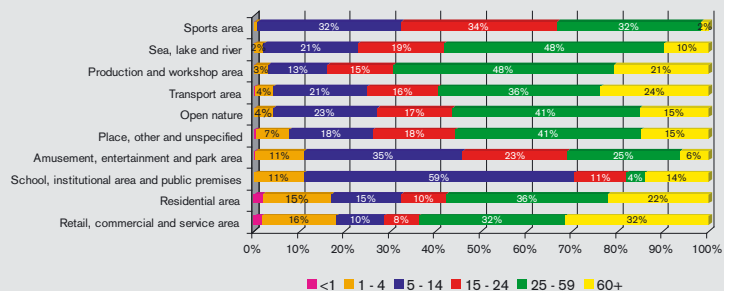


Fig 2: Place of occurrence and age groups

EU Injury Database

IDB - a web database for home and leisure accidents in Europe

IDB Partner Spotlight

The current situation of IDB Implementation in Cyprus

The Ministry of Health has decided to join the IDB project because accidents and injuries in Cyprus make up a heavy toll of mortality and long term disability among the population. There is a pressing need to act in a preventive manner to reduce the incidence of all injuries. We see our participation in this project as a good opportunity to initiate and establish sound and sustainable mechanisms of injury data collection to support policy making, strategic planning and programme implementation.



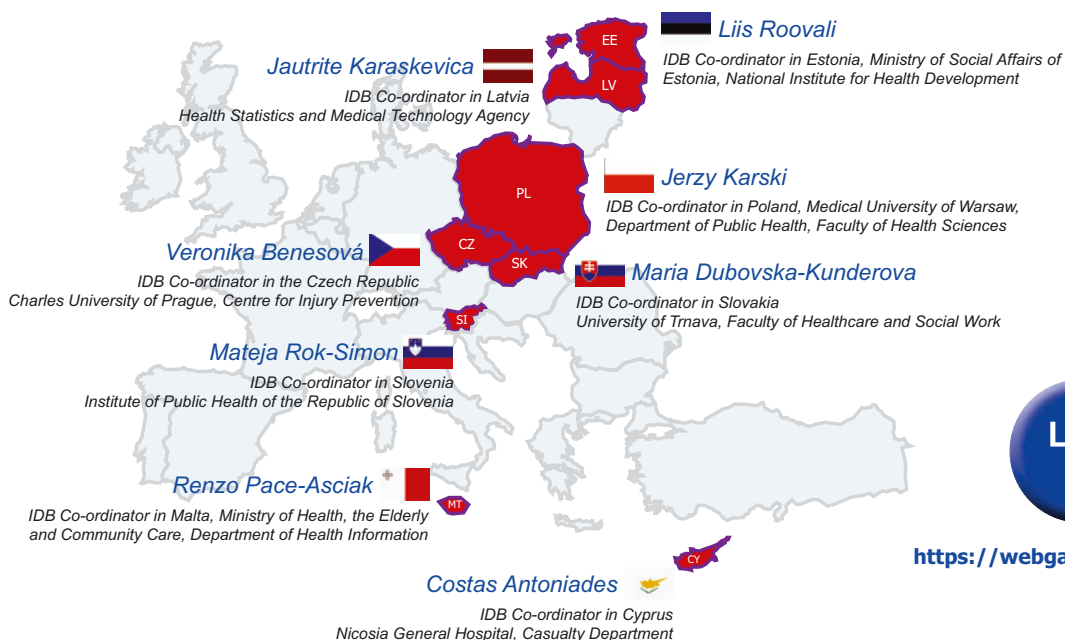
The Medical and Public Health Services are in close cooperation with the Ministry's European Union Coordination Sector and the Health Monitoring Unit. The Director of the Accident and Emergency department of Nicosia General Hospital, Dr. Costas Antoniadou, is the project leader and supervises the data collection. He ensures that data are collected as a representative consecutive sample of all injuries attending the accident and emergency departments. The Health Monitoring Unit plays a coordinating role and is responsible for the preparation of the data entry form, statistical guidance, software installation, recruitment, training, support of staff and administrative matters.

Data collection started as a pilot implementation in February 2006 in Nicosia and Paralimni. Nicosia covers the urban and wider rural area of the district while Paralimni hospital covers a seaside tourist area. Patients or relatives and doctors are interviewed following attendance to the department and information is first entered in the form, than transferred in the software. In-patient admissions are followed up until they are discharged. Coding of the variables is done without any deviation from the manual. Up to now we have collected around 1500 cases and we estimate that, by the end of the project, in December 2006, we shall have collected about 3000 cases.

We hope to be able to proceed with the full implementation of the system in 2007. However, this will depend on the availability of national funds and EU co-financing. There may be a need for a national decision or legislation to institutionalize injury data collection. The forthcoming Communication from the EC to the Council of Health Ministers calling upon the member states for increased efforts in injury surveillance and prevention should have a positive influence on the Cyprus government. Timely adoption by the Council may help sustain the existing IDB pilot implementation.

Pavlos Pavlou, Coordinator Health Monitoring Unit, Ministry of Health, Cyprus

The IDB Network in the new European Member States



<https://webgate.cec.eu.int/idb/>

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