PROJECT UPDATE JUNE 2008

Feasibility of establishing a UK-wide injury database

Background

In 2002 the former Department of Trade and Industry (DTi)[1] ceased to collect injury data for its Home Accident Surveillance System (HASS) and Leisure Accident Surveillance System (LASS). Since this time the database has been accessible through RoSPA's website and is used by 70,000 visitors per year. The number of website visits is growing by 40% per year. Users range from health care professionals and lawyers to risk managers and product designers. Unfortunately, the HASS/LASS database is now out of date and can no longer be used to identify emerging injury trends.

RoSPA, in partnership with Electrical Safety Council and Intertek are researching the feasibility of setting up a new, UK-wide injury surveillance system in the UK. The partners are grateful for additional funding from the British Aerosol Manufacturers' Association (BAMA) and UK Cleaning Products (UKCPI). The objective of the database is to facilitate the prevention of accidental injury by providing data for research, policy development, injury prevention programmes, risk assessment, and product development.

Current surveillance systems

A number of injury databases have been identified in the UK and internationally. All of these databases include unintentional injuries in all settings and some include intentional injuries[2]. In addition there are many specialist databases at international, national and local level.

The most frequent source of data is from hospital Emergency Departments (also known as A&E) although some databases are supplemented by hospital discharge data. Most databases use a sample of hospitals and there are two main methods for collecting this data either by a specialist interviewer (like the old HASS & LASS system) or by the ED staff. Another method is to use a combination of patient self-reporting supplemented by medical details from ED staff. "All-Injury" databases are usually funded through the Public Health budget whilst those databases covering specialist areas are often funded locally by the Public and occasionally, the Private sector.

Some databases give public access to the data. The links for three of these are provided below:

- HASS & LASS data via RoSPA: http://www.hassandlass.org.uk/query/index.htm
- EU Injury Data Base (EU IDB): http://webgate.ec.europa.eu/idb

[1] Many DTi responsibilities are now undertaken by BERR (the Government Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform)

[2] See the list of databases on page 4 .

- USA National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) accessed through Wisqars (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System) http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/WISQARS/

Potential data users and their needs

The project team has identified potential users and their data needs through a series of meetings and questionnaires. Existing users of the HASS LASS database managed by RoSPA and potential new data users, come from the Public, Private and Third Sectors and include professionals such as:

- Injury prevention programme managers,
- Product designers and risk managers from manufacturing, service & retail,
- Teachers, Academics & Researchers,
- Trading Standards Officers,
- Politicians and civil servants,
- Journalists.

From Figure 1 it is evident that existing injury data available through HASS and LASS has provided users with the ability to influence policy and practice at various levels, evaluate the effectiveness of existing programmes, and focus on priority areas for injury prevention. It has provided a foundation for evidence-based practice and product design.

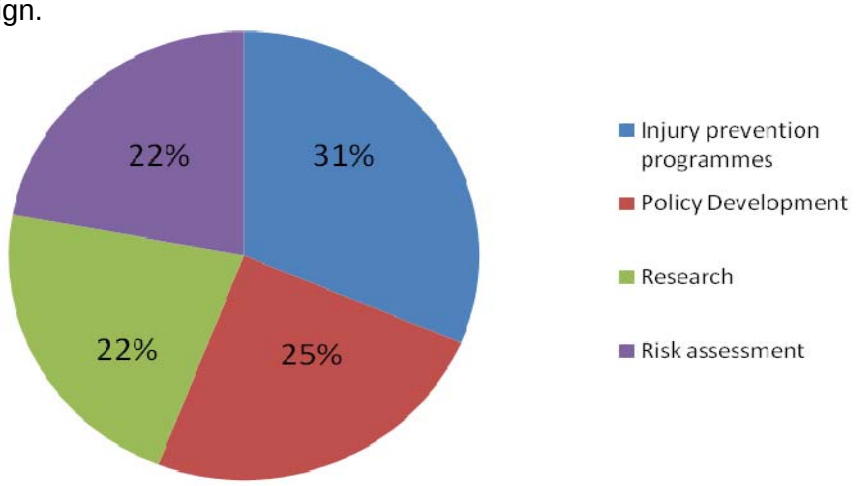


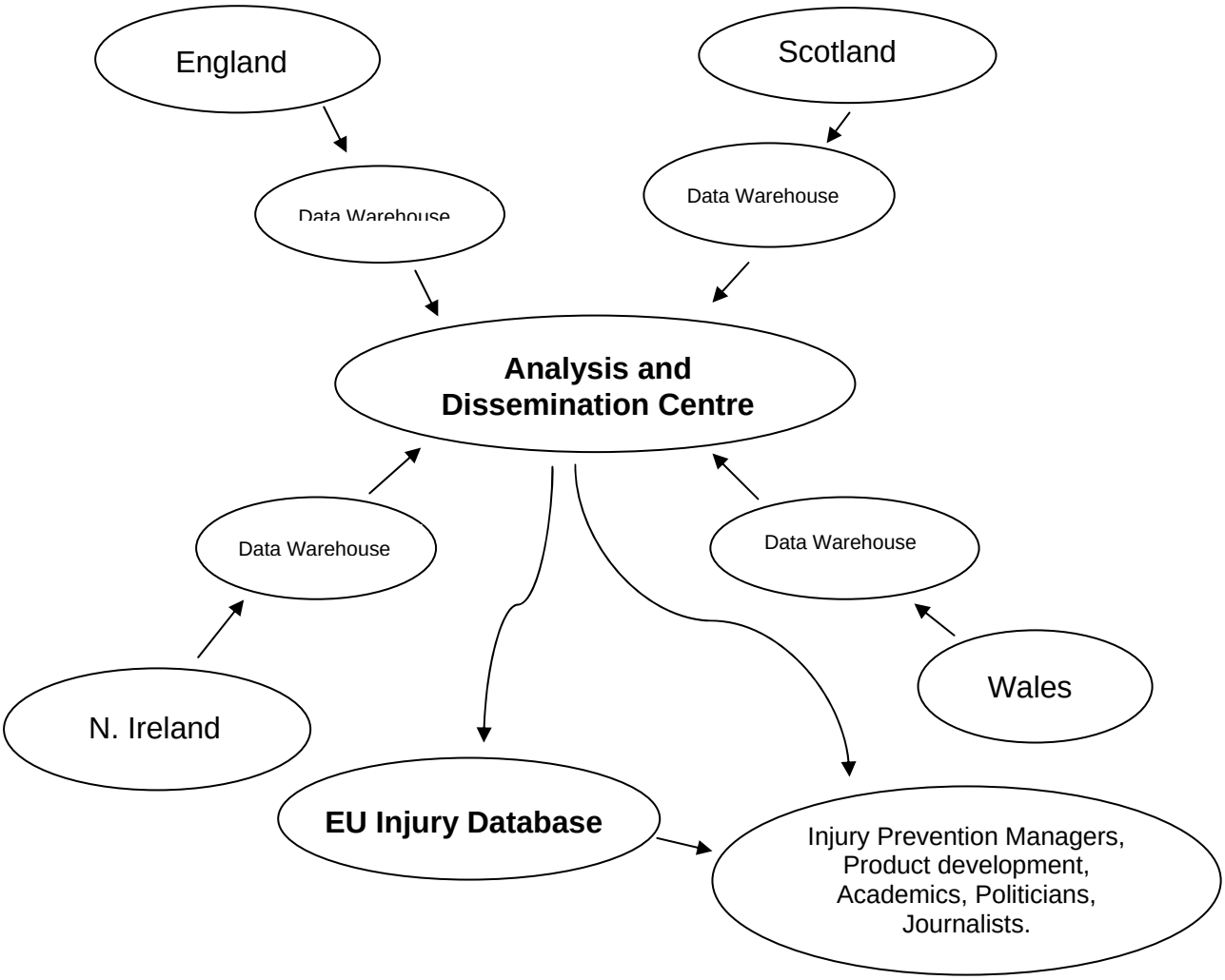
Figure 1: Potential use for the Injury data.

It is clear from our research that there is wide support for access to an up to date UK-wide searchable injury database. It should have as much information as possible about the victim, the circumstances leading to the injury, and the injury itself. Case studies or free text about the incident, provided by the victim or health professional would give information felt to be essential for the prevention of injury. Producing reports (annually or monthly) was thought to be very useful such as those provided by the EU-IDB;
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/idb/documents/Injuries_in_the_EU_2008.pdf

Users would like the data to be as representative as possible at both a regional and national level with a maximum lapse of 2 years for data availability. It should also be linked in with the work that is being completed at a European level.

There has been indication that when this data is made available, access should be free, as currently applied to the HASS & LASS data; however, it is common practice for charges to be made for more complex, time-consuming and highly specialised searches especially those through free text fields.

Data providers
Discussions have taken place with various groups within the NHS to assess the feasbility of collecting data through A&E departments in England. Parallel discussions have also taken place in Scotland. Whilst there is widespread support for a UK injury database, there are many more details that need to be discussed. Below is a possible model of how this could be processed.



A sample of Hospital Emergency Departments from each country in the British Isles would supply data to a local "data warehouse" where the data would be anonomysed. Data is anonymised using various methods; therefore in this instance we are referring to this as "data warehouse". The data would then be sent to a central data processing centre for consolidation and analysis. Depending on funding arrangements, this centre could provide regular trend reports and free access for users to carry out their own searches of the database. In addition, the centre would potentially be able to supply comprehensive data from the UK to the EU Injury Database in order to allow EU-wide comparison.

Design and funding
Once the preceding tasks have been completed the project team will develop and consult on a range of design proposals for a new system. At this stage it is thought that there are likely to be a range of options and associated costs. Stakeholders and users will be consulted to identify the most sustainable and cost-effective solution.

The research project is due to report its findings in October 2008.

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Databases Identified to date:

* Indicates databases known to hold information on intentional as well as unintentional injury

INTERNATIONAL

Injury databases:

- EU IDB, European Injury Database on Home and Leisure accidents*
- Eurostat, European figures on education, Health, population etc.*
- ESAW European statistics on accidents at work (ESAW)

Specific injury databases:

- CARE Community database on Accidents on the Roads in Europe
- WHO HFA Health for all database includes occupational injuries
- CHD - Children's Hospital Choking Database
- Susy Safe Project (Choking)
- IRTAD International Road Traffic Accident Database

NATIONAL

Injury databases:

- AWISS All Wales Injury Surveillance System
- CHIRPP Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (Paediatric)
- HES (Hospital Episode Statistics) - Inpatient records*
- New HES - A&E Minimum Data Set*
- NEISS – National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (CPSC, USA)
- ONS (Office for National Statistics) Mortality data*.
- National Injury Surveillance Unit – NISU (Australia)
- Victoria Injury Surveillance Unit – VISU (Australia)
- Queensland Injury Surveillance unit – QISU (Australia)
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Specific injury databases:

- AAPCC American Poisons Control Centre
- DTI HASS & LASS (now held by RoSPA)
- Fire Statistics, United Kingdom.
- Multi agency database on Drowning (RoSPA, RLSS, RNLI, DFT)
- STATS 19, Road accident database for Great Britain (Department for Transport)
- ICNARC Intensive Care National Audit Research Centre
- RIDDOR Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (occupational)
- TARN, Trauma Audit Research Network

REGIONAL

Injury databases:

- TIIG (Trauma & Injury Intelligence Group) Injury Surveillance Centre*
- West Midlands A&E surveillance system*

Specific injury databases:

- BURNS DATABASE