



ALCOHOL AND INJURIES

BACKGROUND

The involvement of alcohol in injuries has been demonstrated in numerous studies. Hundreds of thousands of deaths occur each year due to alcohol-related intentional and unintentional injuries, and alcohol is involved in up to 30% of adult hospital admissions, in particular admissions into emergency rooms.

The problem of alcohol-related injuries is particularly alarming in many developing countries, where recent trends show an increase in alcohol consumption, injury rates are extremely high, and appropriate public health policies have not been implemented.

However, the role of alcohol in injuries is not yet well understood and documented for development of adequate policy responses, and a system of registration and reporting of alcohol involvement in casualties is still lacking in many developing and developed countries.

The Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence in collaboration with the WHO Violence and Injury Department initiated the **WHO Collaborative Study on Alcohol and Injuries** that has been implemented in the following 12 countries.

Participating Countries

Argentina
Belarus
Brazil
Canada
China
Czech Republic
India
Mexico
Mozambique
New Zealand
South Africa
Sweden

The coordinating centre of the study is the Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation at Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To test in different societies the ability of emergency room staff to assess and record the degree of alcohol intoxication in injured patients using ICD-10 Y91 coding.
- To develop and pilot the materials to assist emergency room staff in assessing and coding the degree of alcohol intoxication.
- To document the proportion of victims of non-fatal injuries with alcohol intoxication in a probability sample of emergency room patients at each site.
- To explore the ways in which alcohol assessments and measurements could be incorporated into routine emergency room practice.
- To examine the context in which drinking had occurred prior to the injury and other drinking variables (amount, type of beverage, etc.) in different cultural settings.
- To collect information on the association of patterns of drinking with injuries.
- To identify prerequisites for establishing surveillance systems for alcohol involvement in non-fatal injuries in each site.

MAIN COMPONENTS

- Feasibility study of Y91 coding for assessment and recording of alcohol intoxication in emergency rooms.
- Documentation of alcohol involvement in non-fatal injuries among emergency room attendees.
- Quantitative survey among emergency room attendees using a specifically designed questionnaire.
- Qualitative study of current local systems of assessment and recording alcohol involvement in injuries.



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