



INJURY BULLETIN

QUEENSLAND INJURY
SURVEILLANCE & PREVENTION
PROJECT

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Mater Adult's Hospital Mater Children's Hospital Mater Priority Emergency Centre Redlands Hospital
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This Month ...

QISPP is interested in expressions of interest in forming an Injury Coalition. Those with a professional interest in injury might like to meet once a month to discuss current issues and present summaries of journal articles to the group.

The group would foster networking and liaison amongst injury control professionals, and ideally reduce the amount of reading we should all be doing to keep up with current research, issues and ideas.

Telephone QISPP (840 8569) to register your interest. If we receive a positive response we will send out notices regarding a meeting in the New Year.

Violence is sweeping our country at an alarming rate. QISPP's 1993 press clipping file on violence is bulging. Brisbane newspapers alone this year have reported on school violence, violence in the workplace, intruder violence, sexual violence, violence in the care industry, street violence, violence in prisons, violence amongst peers, violence in sport, child abuse and domestic violence.

This month we introduce the first in a series of articles on violence, as well as two other detailed topics:

- **Violence Toward the Elderly**
- **Injuries from Swimming Pool Chemicals**
- **Self Harm in Teenagers**

In addition we have some injury facts about hairdressers, and our Season Watch deals with lawn-mowing injuries and magpie attacks.

The Consumer Affairs Product Recall Notices and Banning Orders deal with foodstuffs, bicycles and cot restraints. The first in a series of Consumer Safety Notices is also included, concerning swing cradles with possibly ineffective locking devices which may, under some circumstances, be a suffocation hazard. Copies of these notices for distribution to relevant people or groups can be obtained by phoning the Department of Consumer Affairs on 246 1530 and leaving your name and address.

Violence Toward The Elderly

QISPP recorded 201 violence-related injuries in people aged 60 years or more in the 5 1/2 year period 1/1/88 - 30/6/93.

The admission rate of these injuries was 18%, indicating that the injuries tended to be serious (our average database admission rate is 12%).

Two thirds of those injured were aged 60 to 69 years, and despite the demographic skew towards females in the elderly population, only one third of those injured were female.

The most common times for violence resulting in injury to occur were 4 pm and 7 pm, with the frequency of these injuries remaining high until late in the evening - injuries in general occur most often in the early afternoon.

Half of all violence-related injuries in elderly people occurred in their own home. 5% occurred in residential institutions and involved staff or fellow residents.

Almost three quarters of the injuries involved the face, head or neck. Lacerations were the most common injury type (40%), followed by bruising (33%), fractures (22%) and abrasions (21%).

Domestic violence accounted for two thirds of the injuries. Of these, the largest group were men injured by their sons:

• men injured by sons/sons in law/stepsons:	32%
• women injured by husbands:	18%
• women injured by sons/sons in law:	17%
• men injured by neighbours:	9%
• men injured by wives:	9%
• women injured by neighbours:	8%
• women injured by daughters:	5%
• men injured by daughters:	3%

The data showed that aside from domestic violence, other scenarios leading to violence-related injury in the elderly were assault, alcohol-related violence and violence related to theft and burglary.

Injuries from Swimming Pool Chemicals

The QISPP data show that one in five people presenting with injuries from pool chemicals require admission.

In a group of 129 people injured in this way over a 5 1/2 year period, 15% were children under five years of age.

The most commonly affected body parts were the eyes (58% of cases). Systemic injuries (poisoning through mouth, skin or lungs) were reported in one third of cases, and burns in a further third of cases.

The majority of injuries were sustained while adding chlorine to swimming pools or carrying out pool maintenance. Of the children injured, many were playing too close to adults mixing or adding chemicals to pools and inhaled or had direct contact with the chemicals.

An alarming trend was identified in boys in the 12 to 16 years age group: experimenting with pool chemicals. In five instances reported to QISPP, chlorine had been combined with brake fluid, resulting in combustion or explosion, and causing serious burns.

Warning labels covering the safe storage and handling and directions for use are included on most pool chemicals sold in Queensland.

Season Watch

• It's magpie season again. Our data show that magpie attacks can occur year-round, but the incidence rises dramatically in September and October. Victims will testify that most attacks occur on public roads or in parks. Magpies appear to have a penchant for cyclists. The eyes are most commonly injured, as well as other parts of the face and head. The injuries can be serious: one in five are admitted. A beekeeper's hat with a chicken wire veil?

• Almost half of lawn-mowing injuries are the result of objects being ejected from the mower. Eyes are vulnerable, so protective eyewear should be worn. Another frequent injury is lacerations, mainly to feet and hands, from mower blades.

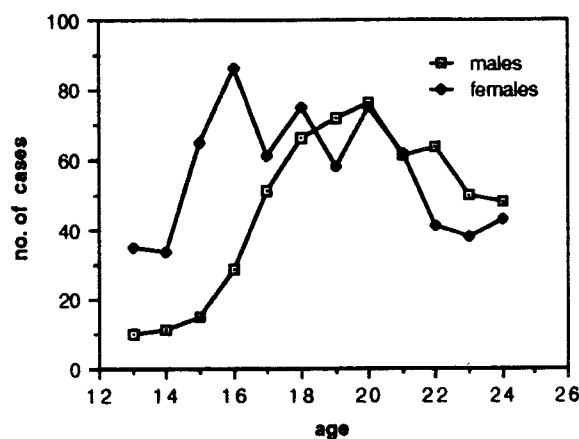
Self Harm in Teenagers

The issue of teenage suicide was highlighted in a recent United Nations Children's Fund report which found that, of the industrialized nations, Australia had the highest suicide rate in the 16 to 24 years age group.

QISPP recorded in the period 1/1/88 to 30/6/93 a total of 1,056 cases of intended self harm in the 16 to 24 years age group. In the earlier teen years - 13 to 15 years of age - a further 170 cases were recorded.

The graph below demonstrates that self harm in teenage girls peaks sharply at 16, 18 and 20 years of age, whereas in boys the curve rises exponentially and peaks at 20 years:

INTENDED SELF HARM AGE BY SEX



In the 16 - 24 years age group almost three quarters of these incidents took place in the teenager's home. In 12% of cases the incident occurred in hospitals or prisons.

75% of the injuries in this age group required admission to hospital. (The average injury admission rate for this age group is 10%). The proportion of admissions resulting in death is not known to QISPP.

In over 80% of cases in this group, drugs and medications such as barbiturates, sedatives, tranquillizers and psychotropic drugs were self administered. Razors were used to inflict injury in 18% of cases, and knives in 12% of cases. (Some cases involved both alcohol or drugs and self mutilation).

Sixteen to twenty-four year olds also ingested or inhaled miscellaneous household chemicals and pesticides in 4% of cases, while 2% of these young people used firearms on themselves.

Did You Know...

Hairdressers have injured themselves at work on razors, scissors, crochet hooks, hot wax and by accidentally ingesting perm neutralizer. Slips and trips are common (wet floors?) and back injuries occur from reaching or bending.

Product Recall Notices

Food

Bertolli: 600 ml bottles of Provvista Sugo Italian Cooking Sauce displaying a manufacturing code on the lid with the prefix "LE". Recalled due to the possibility of foreign bodies which may have entered the product. Contact Paul Berryman, (03) 484 6000.

Green's and Sanitarium: Green's Desiccated Coconut (use-by date June 24, 1994, batch numbers 3175A and 3175D) and Sanitarium 250g Desiccated Coconut (use-by date June 16, 1994) have been recalled by the importer due to possible bacterial contamination. Return to retailer.

Products

Southcott: Portour CRX-200 hybrid bicycle - due to a faulty nut fixture Southcott undertook a replacement program to replace the front brake retaining nut. Contact: Ewen Gellie, (08) 228 2411.

Cot Restraints - Banning Order

The Minister for consumer Affairs has banned the supply the following products in Queensland:

- 'Baby Safe Cot or Bed Restraint'
- 'Johnco Safety Sleep'
- 'Sleepsafe Suit'
- 'Zewi Safety Cover'
- 'Safe n Snug'

These devices are designed or intended to restrain or restrict the movement of a child in a cot or bed.

A device known as the Vomiting Infants' Support Association (V.I.S.A.) Harness which is designed and intended to support and position a child in a cot or bed when the cot is inclined at an angle of up to 30 degrees must have the following warning notice attached to it:

"WARNING - This Device Is Intended To Be Used For The Management of Gastro Oesophageal Reflux In Children. Use Only On The Advice Of A Medical Practitioner"

The word Warning must be in red on a white background and the capital letters must not be less than 5 mm high.

DILBERT

BY SCOTT ADAMS

