



# INJURY BULLETIN

QUEENSLAND INJURY  
SURVEILLANCE & PREVENTION  
PROJECT

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## SEASON'S GREETINGS

*QISPP would like to take this opportunity to extend to everyone Season's Greetings and a safe New Year.*

*The QISPP office will be closed from the 24th December 5.00 pm and will re-open on January 4th 1994.*

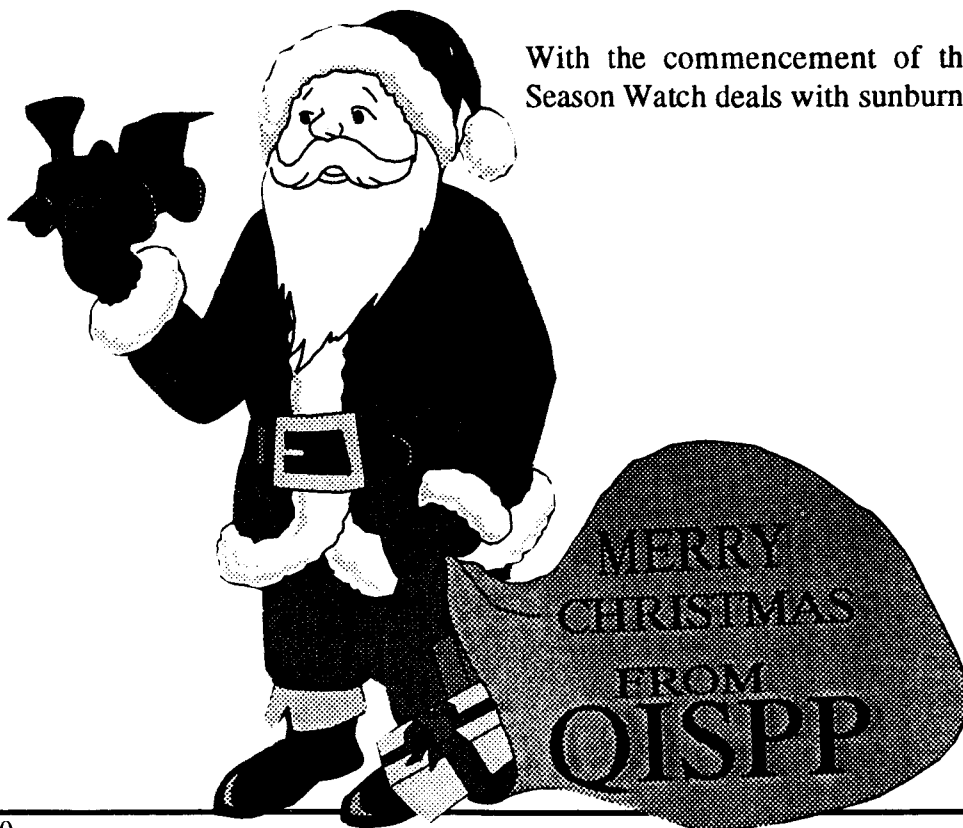
*The next Injury Bulletin will be published in February and we look forward to seeing you then.*

## THIS MONTH.....

This month we cover the following topics:

- Occupational Feature - Violence in the Taxi industry
- Buying Toys for Children
- Eucalyptus Ingestions
- Festive Season Injuries

With the commencement of the Summer, Season Watch deals with sunburn injuries.



# VIOLENCE IN THE TAXI INDUSTRY

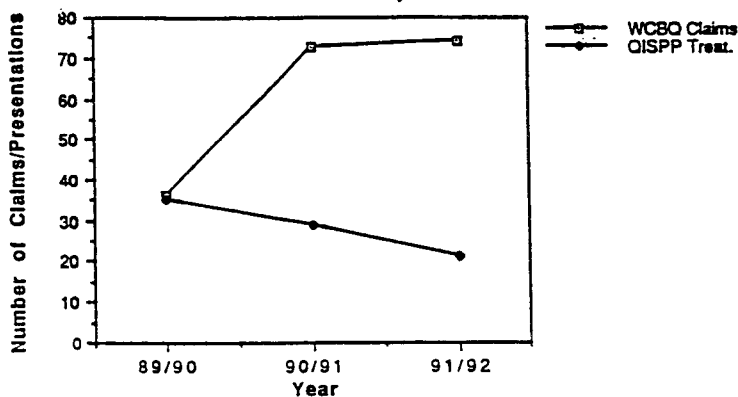
QISPP recorded 110 injuries in taxi drivers over the period July 1989 to June 1992; 25 followed an assault.

All of the assaulted taxi drivers were male and most were in the age range 25 to 54 years. The most common months for assaults were May, July and October. The most common times for violence resulting in injury to occur were in the evening and early morning hours.

The most commonly affected body parts were the head, upper and lower limbs. The most frequent injury types were bruises/inflammation, fractures, sprains/strains/dislocations and open wounds.

The number of QISPP cases has decreased over time. However, when QISPP was compared with Workers' Compensation claims it was found that overall compensation claims were increasing in both number and in severity (the compensation variable "Hospital Bay" was taken to be an indicator of severity). Later questionnaire-based data was collected from 100 randomly-selected taxi drivers. This data was also compared with QISPP and with Workers' Compensation data. Ten per cent of interviewed drivers has sustained an assault-related injury over the period July 1991 to June 1992—most were physically very minor injuries.

Comparison of WCBQ Claims and QISPP Hospital Treatments for Taxi Drivers: July 1989-June 1992.



These comparisons suggest that QISPP records provide a vital, but only partial, indicator of the extent of violence in the Queensland taxi industry.

*Claire James*  
Lecturer in Occupational Health & Safety  
Griffith University

## WE'VE NOW GONE RURAL!

QISPP is pleased to announce that the Central Western Health Region commenced collecting rural injury data on July 1 this year.

The Region is based at Longreach and to date we have received details of over 400 injury cases from Alpha Hospital, Aramac Hospital, Barcaldine Hospital, Blackall Hospital, Longreach Hospital, Winton Hospital, Winton Surgery, Muttaborra OPC, Windorah OPC, Tambo OPC, Isisford OPC and Bedourie OPC. The injuries from the Central Western Region differ vastly in character from the metropolitan injuries seen in Brisbane South. We hope to bring you a report on injuries in this isolated area in the New Year.

### THANK YOU

*QISPP would like to sincerely thank Nurse Zenia Lowe from the Mater Children's Hospital Accident & Emergency Department for all the hard work she has put into following up Injury Surveillance Forms.*

*Thank you Zenia, QISPP are very grateful.*

# TOYS FOR KIDS

As Christmas approaches the rush to buy toys begins. With the media bombarding us with the latest and greatest and what every child "must have" it is a good time to stop and check that the toy is suitable.

Toy manufacturers usually have age specific labelling on their packaging and it is wise to check for this before buying a toy as a guide to its suitability. All toys for the under three age group are required to state on the packaging if any small parts are contained in the toy.

If you are looking at wheeled toys this year, (bikes, rollerblades or skateboards) please remember to buy the appropriate safety gear that should accompany them. Bicycle helmets are not an accessory they are a legal requirement.

Another safety aspect often over-looked is the learning period needed for some toys. If you are buying a bike or riding toy be prepared to spend some time helping the child to gain balance and the skills needed to avoid having an accident.

If you are in doubt as to the safety or suitability of a particular product, the Consumer Affairs office in Brisbane can be contacted for advice.

## EUCALYPTUS OIL I N G E S T I O N S

Eucalyptus oil is known to be toxic. It is freely available over the counter and is used as an inhalation for upper respiratory tract symptoms and as an ointment for relief of muscular pain.

Recently a study of eucalyptus oil ingestion has been undertaken by Dr. Nick Webb and Dr. Rob Pitt using the QISPP data and reported in the Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health.

From a total of 63,109 child injury presentations on the QISPP data base there were 2564 cases of oral poisoning of which 42 cases were eucalyptus oil ingestion. Two additional children had instilled the oil into the nose.

Eight of the children who had ingested the oil exhibited symptoms at home. These included gasping, vomiting, drowsiness, unsteady gait, pallor and irritability. Three children only had symptoms or clinical signs at the time of arrival to the hospital. No children required advanced life support.

Fourteen of the children were admitted to hospital overnight.

There appeared to be no correlation between the amount of eucalyptus oil thought to be taken and the presence of symptoms.

Recognition of toxic substances and provision of safe storage is recommended for all homes.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- For Accident and Emergency Departments the Festive Season is no holiday! QISPP recorded 1071 injuries presenting on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day over a five year period.
- Of these 12% were serious enough to require admission or transfer to another hospital.
- Most injuries were in a residential location and involved recreational activities.
- Acts of aggression and intentional self harm featured heavily in this report as did motor vehicle and traffic accidents.
- An unusually high incidence of animal bites and stings was also recorded during this period.
- As expected bikes, skateboards, rollerskates and trampolines were all implicated as contributing factors and in true Aussie fashion informal cricket was also a top contender in injury factors.

## SEASON WATCH

Queensland has a high incidence of skin disorders directly related to sun damage. As we move into the summer months we need to exercise greater care when outdoors to prevent over-exposure to the sun.

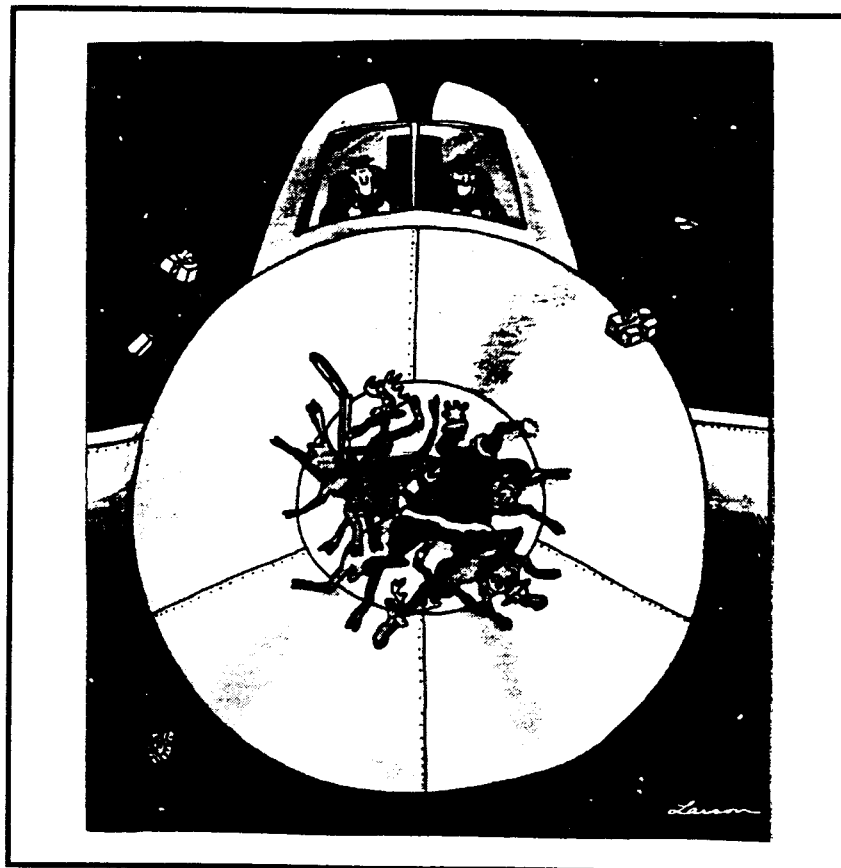
Although sunburn is not seen as a serious injury this is not always the case. Of the sunburn injuries recorded by QISPP, 4% were serious enough to require admission to hospital. Common to many of the cases recorded was the scenario, "fell asleep" and stayed out in the sun "too long". The back and shoulders were the most commonly affected body parts.

## PRODUCT RECALL NOTICE

**KIDDIE LOVE:** Baby Bath Seat recalled due to the suction pads which hold the seat to the bath surface may not provide/maintain sufficient grip. Contact Brian Malone, Phone (02) 498 0441.

**NO FRILLS:** Small Leaf Tea. May contain small pieces of glass, rocks and foil. Franklins 250 gram box with use-by date of October 1995. Contact Michelle Groombridge (07) 271 8856.

**JAMES HARDIE INDUSTRIES LIMITED:** have recalled a thermo electric water chiller which is supplied under the brand name "Ice Croc". It is possible that water may leak from the water container through a protective shroud and onto the unit's printed circuit board presenting a danger of electric shock. There is also a small risk of fire. Contact Wesley Burfitt, (08) 348 0287.



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