

Koprivnica Area as the First Croatian Safe Community for Accident Prevention

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Aim: Analysis of accidents in Koprivnica area as a part of the program of accident prevention in the community proclaimed as the first Safe Community in Croatia.

Methods: The first Safe Community in Croatia has been organized in the area of the former Koprivnica district for the 1996-1998 period. The criteria for its foundation were adopted from similar communities in other countries. We studied the rate of accidents occurring in the area by determining the population risk groups, risk environment, accident distribution according to time and place, and pattern of accident occurrence. One of the main criteria was the registry of injured persons. In Koprivnica, the registration has been performed at the Emergency Service and Surgical Department of the Koprivnica General Hospital. The distribution of injuries is presented according to patients' age, sex and occupation, time and place of accident, alcohol consumption, and patients' 1994/1995 medical history. Since 1996, new forms containing NOMESCO classification, providing more information on the place and mechanism of injuring, have been used in the registration. Data on the patient's mental state at the time of injuring and the criteria of injury severity have also been introduced in the form.

Results: During the 1994-1996 period, there were 3,632 injured persons, 65% males and 35% females. The groups at the highest risk of injuring were young men (aged 15-24 years), school children (aged 7-14 years; boys suffered injuries twice as frequently as girls), small children (aged 0-6 years), and workers. Accidents most frequently occurred in June and July, on Saturdays, and from 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The injured were most commonly transported to a medical institution by car, within 30 min from the accident. The accidents most often occurred near home, at home, at working place, and on the road. The accidents of moderate severity were most common. Open wounds, concussions, and fractures predominated, whereas multiple lesions were recorded in 20% of the patients.

Conclusion: The target intervention measures should be focused on the high-risk population groups including school boys, young men (15-24 years), small children (0-6 years) and workers (injuries inflicted during games, sports, commuting, and at working place). Mass media should be used to inform the public on the fact that accidents most commonly occur in summer, on Saturdays, and in the afternoon. Analysis of the injuries according to the place and mechanism of accident, mental state of the person, lesion severity, etc., should contribute to more efficient intervention measures for the prevention of accidents.

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