Patterns of Injuries among 0-19 year olds in the Kimberley, 2001-2011

The Kimberley is WA’s northern-most region, covering 421,451 square kilometres. The major population centres include Broome, Kununurra, Wyndham, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek, with the region also including many Aboriginal communities and stations servicing the pastoral industry. Due to the small population size and large distances between towns, the distribution of people is quite sparse, which creates a challenge to deliver accessible health services across the region.

There are six public hospitals throughout the Kimberley region, all of which have some level of Emergency facilities. Aboriginal Health Services and the Royal Flying Doctor Service play a vital role in the regions health care and where necessary, patients are flown to either Perth or Darwin in the Northern Territory for treatment.

Demographics

10,917
Children reside in the Kimberley region on average per year

64%
Aboriginal

36%
Non-Aboriginal

Child Injury Stats

About 1 in 15 WA child injury deaths occur in the Kimberley

1,895
Kimberley children treated each year for an injury

413
Kimberley children hospitalised each year for an injury

Government of Western Australia Department of Health

Kodsafe
Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia Western Australia
The Kimberley region recorded both the highest injury death rate (54.3 deaths per 100,000) and hospitalisation rate (3,805.5 per 100,000) among 0 to 19 year olds when compared to all other regions in WA. The Kimberley region also recorded the second highest injury hospitalisation rate of Aboriginal children in WA with 4,504.8 per 100,000 compared to 2,547.1 per 100,000 for non-Aboriginal children.

When child injury hospitalisations are broken down by gender, males aged 0-19 years were more likely to be hospitalised for an injury in the Kimberley region, accounting for 4,614.1 per 100,000 compared to females with a rate of 2,959.2 per 100,000.

The majority of hospitalisations (79.9%, n=3,161) were due to unintentional circumstances. Causes of unintentional injury resulting in hospitalisation in the Kimberley include:

- Falls (22%)
- Transport Accidents (16%)
- Burns & Scalds (5%)
- Poisoning (3%)

**PRIORITIES FOR PREVENTION**

- Raise awareness within the community of the causes of childhood injury and the extent of the problem.
- Convey to the community that childhood injuries are largely preventable.
- Involve key community stakeholders such as parents, carers, child care services, educators, health professionals and sporting organisations.
- Provide culturally appropriate information with a specific focus on injuries to Aboriginal children, children of low-socio economic status and those living in remote communities.
- Encourage supervision as the most important method in the prevention of childhood injuries.
- Promote the use of child car restraints and direct parents and carers to qualified type 2 child car restraint installers.
- Encourage community members to keep children away from hot items that could burn or scald such as camp fires, hot tap water and hot food and drink.
- Educate community members on substances that can be poisonous to children, such as medications, alcohol, cleaning products and other chemicals, and encourage them to lock poisons up and away.

For further information on childhood injury prevention and resources that may be useful in your region please visit the Kidsafe WA website: [www.kidsafewa.com.au](http://www.kidsafewa.com.au)

**REFERENCES**


