Patterns of Injuries among 0-19 year olds in Western Australia, 2001-2011

Western Australia is the largest area in the world covered by a single public health system, covering 2.5 million square kilometres. To accommodate the increasing population and vast size of the state, WA health has been split into five key areas; Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Health Service, North Metropolitan Health Service, South Metropolitan Health Service and WA Country Health Service.

There are 70 hospitals across regional WA, with a number of smaller health centres and nursing posts along with Aboriginal Health, Population Health, Mental Health and Aged-Care Facilities. There are 13 hospitals located in the Perth Metropolitan Area as well as a comprehensive range of health services.

Demographics

566,427
Children reside in Western Australia on average per year

6% Aboriginal
94% Non-Aboriginal

Child Injury Stats

Western Australian child injury deaths have decreased from 105 per year to 79

50,146
Western Australian children treated each year for an injury

10,588
Western Australian children hospitalised each year for an injury
The child injury death rate in Western Australia was 14.0 deaths per 100,000 and a hospitalisation rate of 1,860.1 per 100,000 among 0 to 19 year olds. The hospitalisation rate was highest amongst 15-19 year olds (2,508.3 per 100,000) and 0-4 year olds (1,876.6 per 100,000). Aboriginal children recorded an injury hospitalisation rate of 3,334.82 per 100,000 compared to 1,858.3 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 Western Australia accounting for 2,362.3 per 100,000 compared to females with a rate of 1,327.3 per 100,000.

The majority of hospitalisations (89.6%, n=84,757) were due to unintentional circumstances. Causes of unintentional injury resulting in hospitalisation in Western Australia include:

- Falls (31%)
- Transport Accidents (18%)
- Poisoning (4%)
- Burns & Scalds (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 away and up high.

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

REFERENCES
