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Coronial information system: coming soon?

In issue 4 of the *Monitor* we reported that, as part of a project jointly funded by NISU and Worksafe Australia, a needs assessment and feasibility study for the establishment of a national coronial information system (NCIS) had been undertaken. Out of this process came a draft report which included a proposed model and costing for such a system.

This report was discussed at a national meeting of representatives of coronial jurisdictions and major Australian users of deaths data on 27 and 28 October, where it received strong support as a basis for moving towards setting up a national computerised network.

The meeting recommended that:

- The Australian Coroners' Society take a lead role in developing investigative and recording protocols which would ensure high data quality, and approach State and national attorneys-general for support and resources to develop the system;
- Each coronial jurisdiction inform its attorney-general, and other relevant decision makers, of its support for the development of the NCIS;
- Major users of coronial information indicate in writing, to the Australian Coroners' Society, in-principle endorsement of the NCIS, and ways in which major users can facilitate and resource the development and operation of the NCIS.

The coronial process provides a rich source of information that is not currently accessible due to inadequate data storage and retrieval systems. The NCIS would offer significant benefits to many users through the production of more timely and detailed data on deaths occurring as a result of an external cause.

Once up and running, it is expected that the system will become financially self-sufficient, its operating costs being

covered by major users paying for the services they receive.

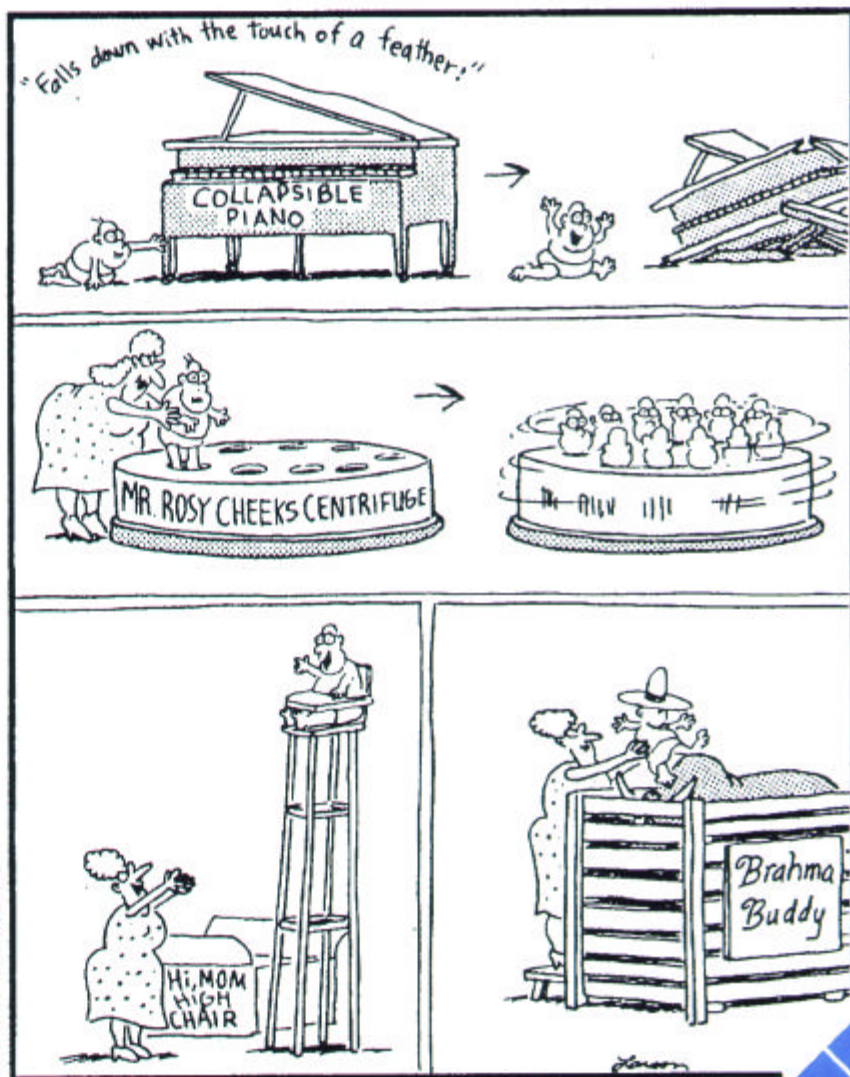
Further information about the proposed system is available from Jerry Moller at NISU, Tel: (08) 374 0970; Fax: (08) 201 7602; e-mail: nisu@flinders.edu.au

Reminder!

The deadline for submitting abstracts for the Third International Conference on Injury Prevention & Control is 1 March 1995.

The scope of the papers being sought is extremely broad, so there's sure to be an opening for what you have to offer!

If you need any advice or information, get in touch with Pam Albany at NISU, Tel: (08) 374 0970; e-mail: nipja@flinders.edu.au



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Baby toys and gifts to avoid this Christmas

States Endorse National Goals and Targets

The requirement, under the 1992 Medicare Agreements Act, for the Commonwealth and all States and Territories to have agreed to national health goals and targets by mid 1994, was met recently when goals, targets and strategies for four focus areas (cardio-vascular disease, cancer, mental health and injury) were formally approved by Commonwealth, State and Territory health ministers.

The Injury Prevention & Control Section in the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health, which has taken a key role in co-ordinating the development of the injury goals, targets and strategies, has already provided the resources for a number of projects aimed at implementing injury control strategies identified in the report. These have included:

- reviews of available countermeasures in the areas of water safety, falls in young children and injury to home handy persons;
- a major evaluation of interventions to prevent falls among older people;
- a national General Practice Injury Survey Pilot Study (to trial the collection of data on injuries treated by general practitioners across Australia);
- a project to assess and improve warning and first aid statements, signal headings and safety directions in the Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Drugs and Poisons.

Whilst it remains to be seen how States and Territories will pursue their commitment to the national injury goals and targets, it is likely that those States that currently have a strategic plan for injury control, will continue to use this as the basis for their prevention activities.

Responsibility for monitoring progress towards achieving goals and targets on a national basis has been given to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). In this process, NISU will monitor progress in relation to the injury goals and targets, and has drafted an initial report on the main injury targets. The AIHW is preparing a paper that will identify the data monitoring needs arising from goals and targets. A single Commonwealth/State review group will be established to share information, oversee implementation strategies and act as a reference for the AIHW in its monitoring role.

The report, *Better Health Outcomes for Australians: National Goals, Targets and Strategies for Better Health Outcomes into the Next Century*, which encompasses all four focus areas, is available from Commonwealth Government Bookshops at a cost of \$29.95. Further information about the injury goals and targets is available from Erin Cassell in the Injury Control Section of the Department of Human Services and Health, Tel: (06) 289 3997; e-mail: erin.cassell@hhlgs.ausgovhcs. telememo.au

Down The Gopher Hole

In the last issue, we shared with readers our delight at the information that computer technology is placing at our fingertips. Here is a little titbit that one of our technological gophers has brought us:

Roller blading injuries in the US¹

In a press release, the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) projected that, during 1994, hospital emergency departments in that country would treat 83,000 roller blading injuries compared with an estimated 37,000 in 1993. Nearly 49,000 of these injuries (approximately 60%) would involve children under the age of 15.

CPSC staff have further estimated that, during 1993, roller blading injury costs to society were US\$180 million, including physicians and hospital bills, pain and suffering and missed work by both those injured and their caretakers. The average cost of an injury during 1993 was US\$5,000.

The CPSC has recommended several safety guidelines aimed at reducing the number of injuries sustained in association with rollerblading.

A copy of the full press release is available from Renate Kreisfeld, Tel: (08) 374 0970; Fax: (08) 201 7602; e-mail: nirk@flinders.edu.au

Farm Safety: Research to Guide Action Groups

Workers in the agricultural sector have high rates of injury. A newly published report provides detailed information on the rates, costs, and circumstances of farm injuries in six regions in Queensland in 1992/93. The report includes safety profiles on six major agricultural sectors, and an in-depth profile of tractors and their safety features, especially roll over protection structures (ROPS). Overall, only about half of the tractors were reported to have dealer fitted ROPS, and another 12% had ones made locally. The proportion with ROPS was lower for old tractors (37% of the tractors were more than 20 years old).

Farm Safety Committees participated in designing the sample survey of farms on which the report is based, and encouraged farmers to provide information. The findings will be provided to the committees to support their planning and implementation of regional and State farm safety programs.

NISU funded the project. Keith Ferguson, Senior Health and Safety Advisor at the Division of Workplace Health and Safety in the Queensland Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations, undertook it on behalf of the Queensland Farmsafe Committee.

Further information can be obtained from Keith Ferguson, Tel (07) 227 4860. NISU will have available a limited number of copies of the report. The title is *Farm survey of workplace injury/illness factors to support activity planning for six Queensland Farm Safety Action Groups*. Tel: (08) 374 0970; e-mail: nisu@flinders.edu.au

Acknowledgements

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Something to read ...?

Survey of Older Road Users: Behavioural and Travel Issues

This report, published by the Monash-University Accident Research Centre in August 1994, contains the results of a study of attitudes, habits and perceptions on a range of road user safety issues for older people in Australia.

For further information, contact Brian Fildes at MUARC, Tel: (03) 905 4369; Fax: (03) 905 4363.

Injury Hospitalisations in Victoria, 1991-92

Published by the Victorian Department of Health and Community Services, this summary report focuses on injuries to children and youth.

For further information, contact Dr Michael Ackland, Tel: (03) 616 8031.

Taking Injury Prevention Forward: Strategic Directions for Victoria, 1994

This document, the product of broad consultation with key stakeholders in Victoria, aims to identify the major causes of disability and death due to injury; sets goals and targets for injury prevention; identifies strategies to achieve these targets; and suggests key agencies and organisations to be involved in the implementation of strategies.

For further information, contact Katherine Thompson, Tel: (03) 616 7238; Fax: (03) 616 8383.

Hospitalisation due to alcohol-caused injuries in Western Australia, 1981-1992

Published in August this year, this report documents the short-term effects of alcohol consumption on the health of Western Australians. These effects were determined by estimating the number of hospital admissions attributable to alcohol-caused injuries, by sex and health region.

For further information, contact Elizabeth Unwin, Tel: (09) 222 4222.

Australian Directory of Injury Control Personnel

In April 1993, NISU published the first edition of its *Australian Directory of Injury Control Personnel*. The *Directory* contained information about more than 350 individuals with a significant involvement in activities directed towards injury prevention and control.

NISU has now begun compiling the second edition of the *Directory*, which is due to be published in April 1995. As a part of this process, we'll be writing to everyone who has indicated to us that they would like their name included in the *Directory*, asking them to check their details and advise us of any necessary amendments. If your name is not currently listed, but you'd like it to be, please let us know.

For further information about the *Directory*, contact Renate Kreisfeld at NISU, Tel: (08) 374 0970; Fax: (08) 201 7602; e-mail: nirk@flinders.edu.au

Road Injury in Australia

In *Monitor 4* we reported on the release of a NISU publication entitled *Road Injury In Australia*. That publication, the first in a series, contained an extensive range of statistical analyses of data collected about fatal and non-fatal cases of road injury that occurred in 1990.

Those of our readers that found this report of interest will be pleased to learn that the second report in this series is due for release before the end of 1994. This second edition of *Road Injury in Australia* will present analyses of 1991 data.

For further information, contact Peter O'Connor at NISU, Tel: (08) 374 0970; Fax: (08) 201 7602; e-mail: nipo@flinders.edu.au

NISU Data Reports

Issue 4 of the *Monitor* included an article about the many and varied requests for information that NISU receives. Here are a few more that may be of more general interest:

- Injuries associated with the failure or malfunction of bicycle parts;
- Injuries sustained by ambulance officers;
- Incidents of strangulation or hanging, involving children, where the mechanism was household furnishings or structures;
- Injuries associated with toy boxes.

For further information about the reports mentioned above, contact John Dolinis or Renate Kreisfeld at NISU, Tel: (08) 374 0970; Fax: (08) 201 7602; e-mail: nisu@flinders.edu.au

First National Conference on Injury Prevention & Control

27-28 February 1995
Sydney

Contact: Expert Conferences, PO Box 150, Lyncham ACT 2602; Fax: (06) 257 4038.

Meeting of the National Community-Based Injury Prevention Network

2 February-3 March 1995
Illawarra, New South Wales

Contact: Ms Katherine van Weerdenburg, Healthy Cities Illawarra, Tel: (042) 265 000; Fax: (042) 265 339.

Third International Conference on Product Safety Research

6-7 March 1995
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Registration forms for this conference are available from Jerry Moller at NISU, Tel: (08) 374 0970; Fax: (08) 201 7602; e-mail: nisuf@flinders.edu.au

The Biomechanics of Impacts

13-15 September 1995
Brunnen, Switzerland

This is the annual conference of the International Research Council on Biokinetics of Impacts (IRCOBI).

Contact: Antoinette Charpenne, IRCOBI Secretariat, INRETS, 109 Avenue Salvador Allende, 69500 Bron, France, Fax: +33 72 36 24 37.

Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine's 39th Annual Conference

16-18 October 1995
Chicago, USA

The conference will include papers on areas of traffic injury control, biomechanics and highway safety, such as occupant crash protection, cost of traffic injury, alcohol and other drugs, etc.

Contact: AAAM, 2340 Des Plaines Avenue, Suite 106, Des Plaines, ILL 60018, USA, Fax: +1 708 390 9962.

Measuring the Burden of Injury

February 1996
Fremantle

To be held in association with the Third Conference on Injury Prevention and

Control, this meeting will bring together people working in injury surveillance, data linkage, epidemiology, health economics, and injury control policy to explore problems, recent advances, and solutions in determining the burden that injury places on the community.

Contact: Road Accident Prevention Research Unit, Department of Public Health, University of Western Australia, Tel: (09) 380 1302; Fax: (09) 380 1199.

5th International SAFCOMM Conference

February 1996
Bulla Shire, Victoria

To be held in association with the 3rd International Conference on Injury Prevention & Control.

Contact: Mark Hennessy, Tel: (054) 271 447; Fax: (054) 274 004.

3rd International Conference on Injury Prevention & Control

18-22 February 1996
Melbourne

Contact: Marg Scarlett, Convention Network, Tel: (03) 646 4122; Fax: (03) 646 7737; e-mail: mscarlett@peg.pegasus.oz.au

First National Conference on Injury

Going under the title of Working as a Nation to Prevent Injury, the first National Conference on Injury Prevention and Control is being held to foster co-operative action, across Australia, in the sphere of injury. The Conference will be held on 27-28 February 1995 at the Hotel Nikko in Sydney's Darling Harbour. The meeting will rely heavily on the use of interactive sessions for the exchange of information on many aspects of injury (including consumer safety, childhood injury, surveillance, workplace injury, etc.).

Two optional workshops, Preventing Fall Injury Among Older People and Preventing Burns and Scalds - Taking Action in 1995, have been scheduled for 1 March 1995. These workshops are intended to provide an opportunity for researchers, practitioners and policy makers to share information and encourage the spread of best practice and co-operative action across Australia on these issues.

Information about the Conference is available from Expert Conferences, Tel: (06) 257 6970; Fax: (06) 257 4038.

The closing date for registration is Friday, 27 January 1995. The cost of registration is \$195. Places are limited because of the size of the venue.

FOOTNOTE

- 1 From US Consumer Product Safety Commission Press Release #94-091, 2 June 1994.

Australian Injury Prevention Bulletin

You'll find, enclosed with this mailout, a copy of issue 8 of the *Bulletin*. If, when reading through it, any questions or comments spring to mind, John Dolinis, the editor, would like to hear from you. His contact details are given on the back cover of the *Bulletin*.

The *Injury Issues Monitor* is the journal of the National Injury Surveillance Unit (NISU), Mark Oliphant Building, Laffer Drive, Bedford Park, 5042
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Letters to the Editor are welcome.
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