

## **(943) Transport, Interpersonal Violence And Sports Related Injuries Reported By Australian Adolescents**

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### **PROBLEM**

Injury is a leading cause of death and disability among young people. Mortality rates resulting from injury among young people reveal links to risk taking behaviour, consistently involving transport and interpersonal violence. Transport accidents are also a primary cause of hospitalisation among young people, while studies involving less serious injuries reveal that sport is a common causal factor. The Adolescent Injury Checklist (AIC; Jelalian et al., 1997) is a self report measure of the types of injuries experienced by adolescents in the past 6 months and the situations in which they occurred, whether these injuries were related to alcohol or other drug use and whether they resulted in medical attention. The AIC has been developed and used in both high school and Emergency Department samples, with data only having been reported for U.S. adolescents.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this research is to develop a database of Australian adolescents' responses to the AIC, which will be used to examine the transport, interpersonal violence and sports related injuries of adolescents surveyed in both high school and Emergency Department contexts. The results of this study will be used to inform an intervention that is currently being developed by the researchers, which aims to reduce risk taking behaviour and associated injury among high risk adolescents.

### **METHOD**

A total of 736 Year 9 students (mean age = 13.6 years) from five high schools in Queensland, Australia were administered the AIC in either their health classes (three schools) or an assembly attended by all Year 9 students (two schools). Adolescents aged 14 - 18 years will also be recruited from the Emergency Departments of three metropolitan hospitals and a fourth hospital in a low socio-economic area and administered the AIC in the Emergency Department waiting room (n = approx. 300).

### **RESULTS**

The types of injuries experienced most frequently by high school adolescents were relatively minor soft tissue injuries, including cuts, bruises, bleeding and sprained muscles. The leading causes of injury among high school adolescents were sporting activities (57%) and transport (54%), while interpersonal violence related injuries were also relatively frequent, with 42% having been injured in a physical fight and 30% having been injured as a result of a physical attack. Alcohol use was most frequently reported in association with transport injuries and physical fights, while sporting and transport injuries most often resulted in medical treatment. High school adolescents reported few injuries linked to drug use. Those who had experienced injuries resulting from risk behaviours (transport and violence) were also more likely to report having had injuries associated with alcohol use. The reported injury experiences of high school based adolescents will be compared to those of adolescents surveyed in hospital Emergency Departments.

### **CONCLUSION**

Conclusions will be drawn regarding the comparative transport, interpersonal violence and sports related injuries reported by high school based adolescents and a group of young people presenting to hospital Emergency Departments. The results of this study are valuable in that they provide a representation of injuries sustained by Australian adolescents that is not limited to Emergency Department presentations or hospitalisation/mortality data. The findings of this research are currently being used to inform the content of a youth risk taking and injury intervention program