**Country update on Injury Surveillance: Austria**



*Introduction*

In 1987, the former Austrian Institute for Home and Leisure Safety was founded as a branch of the Austrian Road Safety Board (KFV). At the time, there were no national statistics on injuries at home and in leisure time activities. As a consequence, frequency, severity and causation of important groups of injuries (e.g. child injuries at home, falls on public roads, accidents while housekeeping, or injuries due to playing football) were unknown, and rational priority setting in prevention was hardly possible.   
Therefore, the first injury prevention programmes in Austria had to rely on data from Switzerland, United Kingdom and the Netherlands, where national injury surveillance systems were already in place.

*National IDB-system*

When Austria joined the European Union in 1995, the Austrian government and KFV took the opportunity to join the already existing European Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance System (EHLASS). In 1996, a sustained hospital (ED) based surveillance system was established in six hospitals in Austria.

Since this year, the system (“IDB-Austria”) provided about 10.000 detailed described injury cases annually (admissions as well as out-patients, accidents as well as self-harm and assaults) and has been funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. The Austrian system is based on face-to-face interviews with follow-up injury patients in the ED by specially trained KFV staff.

# *Insights gained*

With this wealth of information, it was possible since 1996 to produce:

* Annual reports on home, leisure and sport injuries, their health and economic burden, and the main characteristics of this group of health damages, which is responsible for about eight percent of all health expenditures in Austria.
* Annual national estimates of diverse categories of injuries, e.g. collisions during downhill skiing, scalds of children, injuries in kitchens, falls of elderly on stairs, bicycle accidents on public roads.
* Detailed case descriptions to develop typologies of the causation of specific injury groups, based on the co-variation of the various external and personal factors, which helped for instance to revise industrial standards for cigarette lighters, mini-scooters, and slip-resistance of floor coverings.
* Risk factor analyses and evaluation studies about the effect of specific campaigns (e.g. bicycle helmet, baby walkers) at rather low costs.

*Use of data*

KFV has been collecting IDB Austria data since 1996 with the main purpose of facilitating evidence based injury prevention. KFV issues weekly press releases on a wide range of injury topics to inform the public about risks and prevention measures (most of them related to the IDB). In turn, the media and injury prevention stakeholders regularly request IDB data. Various KFV research projects rely on IDB data and the annual IDB Austria report is available to the product safety stakeholders on the website of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. Another important IDB costumer in Austria is the safe community initiative Sicheres Vorarlberg ([www.sicheresvorarlberg.at](http://www.sicheresvorarlberg.at)) which has commissioned two big IDB in depth programmes in the last years, one on winter sports and an ongoing one on summer sports.

*Future outlook*

In 2016, the scope of the IDB Austria data system has been nearly doubled, covering now ten hospitals across the country and aiming at about 18.000 interviews per year for the IDB full dataset.

New research areas that KFV is particularly interested in are health impacts of road crashes (e.g. serious injuries and long-term consequences) and under-reporting of injuries of vulnerable road users. The IDB input to both topics is currently being discussed in a Horizon 2020 project on traffic safety named SafetyCube (<http://www.safetycube-project.eu/>).

*More information:*

[robert.bauer@kfv.at](mailto:robert.bauer@kfv.at)

*IDB-related publications:*

Injury Database Austria. Jahresbericht 2015. <https://www.sozialministerium.at/cms/site/attachments/8/8/7/CH3434/CMS1484229858045/idb_austria_jahresbericht_2015.pdf>

Five years of mandatory bicycle helmets for children in Austria – a post hoc evaluation. <http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/22/Suppl_2>

Ursachen und Risikofaktoren von Verletzungen im Skiurlaub., Deutsche Zeitschrift für Sportmedizin, 64. Jg., Nr. 2, 2013, S. 52-56.

Ursachen und Einflussfaktoren von Personenkollisionen auf der Skipiste., Sportverletzung-Sportschaden, Vol. 27, Nr. 2, 2013, S. 100-104.

Accidents and injuries in the EU. Results of the EuroSafe Reports. [Bundesgesundheitsblatt Gesundheitsforschung Gesundheitsschutz.](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24838539) 2014 Jun; 57(6): 673-80. doi: 10.1007/s00103-014-1969-5

Schifahren und Snowboarden in Vorarlberg. Unfallerhebung Wintersaison 2011/2012., Kuratorium für Verkehrssicherheit, September 2012, 70 S.

Das Unfallrisiko auf Fußwegen in Österreich: [http://www.bmvit.gv.at/bmvit/verkehr/straße/sicherheit/fonds/vsf/downloads/02endberichtunfallrisiko auffusswegen.pdf](http://www.bmvit.gv.at/bmvit/verkehr/straße/sicherheit/fonds/vsf/downloads/02endberichtunfallrisiko%20auffusswegen.pdf)

KFV IDB Austria online access:<http://unfallstatistik.kfv.at/index.php?id=58>

KFV online access to IDB Austria related press releases: <http://www.kfv.at/presse/presseaussendungen/>