Reviewer's report

Title: Population-based Incidences of Non-fatal Injuries - Results of a German-wide Telephone Survey 2004

Version: 1 Date: 5 November 2012

Reviewer: Gabriele EllsaSZer

Reviewer's report:

The paper looks at injuries among adults (18+) differentiated according to age group. It focuses on the relationship between unintentional injuries related to location and education level.

The analysis of the data is well structured and the results interesting especially concerning the relation between accident location and education level.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   The authors investigate how the place of injury is related to educational status. The topic is of relevance for public health to identify which groups are particularly vulnerable in hazardous settings.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   The authors conduct a telephone survey based on a randomly drawn sample from the telephone book. The method is appropriate for generating new insights, as it allows data on the education status of participants to be collected.

3. Are the data sound?
   The data is generally sound.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   A number of limitations of the study should be accounted for and pointed out more clearly:

   (1) With 100 interviews, the response rate amongst the age group 80+ has been low, considering that the age group has a total population of about 4.3 million. Consequently this age group is underrepresented in the sample. With a total of 13 reported injuries in this age group, the data cannot be representative. The data for this age group should be excluded from the study. Moreover, statistics given for traffic accidents according to road user among the elderly should be excluded because of the low number of traffic accidents in the age group 70-79 (n=14) and 80+ (n=8). The same limitation applies for leisure accidents among
70-79 (5 accidents) and among 80+ (zero accidents).

(2) Injuries at work (employed subjects) are taken for the age group up to 70 years. In the age group of 60-69 years, only 2 work related injuries are reported, suggesting that there is no risk for people in this age group. Considering the German retirement age of 65 years for men and 63 years for women there is no sufficient work time among the 60-69 age group compared to the 18-59 age groups. Henceforth work related injuries should only be looked at in the 18-59 age group.

(3) The results that injury location is related to educational status should be further assessed for its statistical significance.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Limitations in terms of the data set should be discussed in more detail (see 5).

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building both published and unpublished?
   yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes

Assessment of the paper

The authors have chosen an important topic in public health and presented interesting results on the relationship between accident setting and education level among adults.

However, the authors should address the weakness of a limited samples size in the age group 70+ in a compulsory revision.