



Recommendation of the Council
concerning the Establishment of
Data Collection Systems Related
to Injuries Involving
Consumer Products

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Date(s)

Adopted on 13/02/1978

Background Information

The Recommendation concerning the Establishment of Data Collection Systems Related to Injuries Involving Consumer Products was adopted by the OECD Council on 13 February 1978 on the proposal of the Committee on Consumer Policy. The Recommendation calls for domestic collection of data on injuries (from superficial to serious to death) involving consumer products in order to help identify priorities and inform policy making for consumer product safety. It provides a high-level methodology for collecting data that helps determine the relationship between injuries and consumer products hazards, and is comparable across Adherent countries.

THE COUNCIL,

HAVING REGARD to Article 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

HAVING REGARD to the Report by the Committee on Consumer Policy of 26 May 1977 on Data Collection Systems related to Product Involved Injuries [CCP(77)1];

CONSIDERING that the establishment of adequate systems for the collection of data on injuries involving consumer products would permit the analysis of unreasonable risks, enable Member countries to take remedial action based on an objective assessment of the hazards and thereby increase the protection of the consumer;

CONSIDERING that the establishment of such data collection systems in accordance with common guidelines would, in addition, help to raise the significance of the data by achieving international uniformity and compatibility, greatly enhance the applicability and relevance of the findings in any one country and increase the comparability of safety planning procedures among countries;

CONSIDERING that greater international compatibility of data should lead to easier development of common perception of priorities in the product safety field and, in the long run, to the adoption of common safety standards which would avoid creating international barriers to trade;

On the proposal of the Committee on Consumer Policy;

I. RECOMMENDS that Member countries which have not already established a system of data collecting related to injuries involving consumer products should give serious consideration to establishing such a system.

II. RECOMMENDS that all Member countries, when setting up or revising their national data collection system, take into consideration the guidelines set forth in the Annex to this Recommendation, which forms an integral part of it, and that special attention should be given to those aspects of the system which ensure that the data collected may be compared between Member countries.

III. INSTRUCTS the Committee on Consumer Policy to keep under review the application of the present Recommendation and to report to the Council before 31 December 1980 on measures taken by the Governments of Member countries to give effect thereto.

ANNEX

GUIDELINES CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DATA COLLECTION SYSTEMS RELATED TO INJURIES INVOLVING CONSUMER PRODUCTS

In considering the several approaches to data collection it is for each country to decide what methods are most suitable within the framework of its own institutions and resources. However, when setting up a system a country should endeavour to ensure that there is the fullest possible degree of international compatibility.

Once a country has accepted that some form of data collection is necessary, it has a broad range of options in selecting the type of information gathering system that will help it determine the relationship between injuries and consumer product hazards. Generally speaking both the options and the resulting system will depend on the scope, depth and the frequency of the data collected, i.e. the degree of comprehensiveness and accuracy of the data that the country is willing or able to achieve.

A decision to initiate an injury data collection system involves a number of other requirements which must be considered from the outset. The decisions that are made not only affect the data collected in that particular country but its comparability with data from other countries. The important aspects are:

1. Definition of Terms

All relevant terms that are likely to be used in connection with the operation of the information gathering system must be clearly defined to avoid misrepresentation of the information obtained. It is also important to define the degree of comprehensiveness of the system. This will avoid misleading comparisons between data collected in different countries. The definition of the injuries involving consumer products which are to be included or excluded from the system will to some extent reflect the detailed responsibilities of the body responsible for the data collection system.

2. Sources of the Data

The possible data sources from which information about injuries involving consumer products could be collected should be considered. It is important to ensure that serious injuries are adequately reported in the system.

3. Sampling the Data

If the injury data are to be obtained using a statistically selected sample then a sampling procedure, including an extrapolation methodology, must be developed to account for injuries involving consumer products over the entire country. Naturally the procedure will vary from country to country but should ensure that the data collected and analysed is representative.

4. The Data Required and Collected

The data collected should, as a minimum, allow the situation with respect to accidents involving consumer products to be monitored accurately. It should also act as a basis for establishing priorities for allocating resources and enable particular cases to be identified for further study. Such data will include details of consumer products involved, accident type, the injury and its severity, the location of the accident, the age and the sex of the victim, the date of the accident and an identifying number.

5. Validity of the Data

It is important to build into the data collection system some method of checking the validity of the data collected. Such a check can act as a device to monitor and check the reliability and efficiency of the data collection system. Since injury data will be obtained by different persons across a country, training and appropriate management is required to ensure that consistent data are reported, to minimise personal bias and misrepresentation and to maintain consistent reporting rates.

6. Coding

A coding system and in particular a product coding classification must be developed to facilitate the transmission, storage and retrieval in a convenient form of pertinent information concerning consumer products involved. The way such data are coded could be consistent between countries but will be limited by the consumer's knowledge of the product. Product coding which is consistent in several countries will allow comparisons to be made. More particularly it would mean that the data about injuries involving the same consumer product but occurring in different countries could be considered together, thus producing enough cases for systematic study when, for example, accidents associated with a new product occur with low frequency in any one country.

7. Data Retrieval

Consideration must be given to the way the data records are retrieved to obtain information about a particular case or cases. This will be closely related to the coding system used and the type of analysis carried out.

8. Analysis

The way the data are analysed will depend on the precise use being made of the data, both as a monitoring device and as a means of highlighting problem areas.

9. Weighting by Type and Severity of Injury or Cost

Since product-related injuries vary from superficial to serious (including death) and from a single treatment to long periods as an in-patient, a system of weighting to account for the range of severity or cost of the injuries may need to be developed. If such systems are compatible then more use can be made of the data at an international level.

10. Organisation

A country setting up on developing a data collection system must consider the organisation required to collect, control, analyse and disseminate the information. Such an organisation should be integrated with other aspects of consumer protection so that the information will be readily available to those in a position to use it.

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