

Circumstances and Strategies of Prevention of Road Transport Injuries in Agricultural Workers

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Biography

Peter is a Research Officer at the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety (ACAHS). His work at the Data Centre of ACAHS involves analysing and reporting various injury/illness data of the farming community in Australia. Road safety to the farming community is one of his topics of interest. Before migrating to Australia from India three years back he was researching on the bioscience and health related fields. He completed his doctoral program in biosciences.

Abstract

The circumstances in which road transport injuries occur to agricultural workers differ from those in other industries due to the diverse nature of farm environments and activities. Seven percent of all injury claims in agricultural workers were due to road transport and fatal claim rate of road transport injuries was the highest of all the agencies. Five percent of all workers' compensation claims due to road transport injuries was from agricultural workers. More than half (57%) of the mechanisms of road transport injuries in agricultural workers' compensation claims were 'unspecified' compared with only 13% in the transport industry. The Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety's short report on 'Road fatalities in the farming community' indicated the factors contributing to fatal road injuries on farms.

Nearly a quarter of the road transport injuries on farms were due to falls. More than half of the injuries were due to motorcycles whereas in transport industry motorcycle injuries were less than two percent. More than half of the motorcycle injury claims' on farms were from adolescents and young adults (less than 30 years). Rough terrain with uneven surfaces, animals and farm structures are some of the contributing factors of road transport injuries on farms.

To develop practical prevention strategies to address farm road transport injuries, primary and contributing factors must be more clearly defined; in particular, initiatives have to be made to identify the 'unspecified' mechanisms. Specific preventive programs need to be developed for adolescents and young adults on motorcycles and to encourage agricultural workers to follow the standards that apply on public roads in farming settings.