

SafetyLit: A bibliographic service for injury prevention

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Abstract

SafetyLit is a free bibliographic database and current literature update service. Its contents are selected from more than 9000 scholarly journals. Among these are 140 journals that have a focus on ground transportation issues.

Keywords

Bibliographic databases, Journal articles, Safety research

Introduction

SafetyLit® (short for safety literature) is a bibliographic database and weekly online update of recently published scholarly research in the broad field of injury prevention and safety promotion (IPSP). SafetyLit is a free service, presented without advertising by the Center for Injury Prevention Policy and Practice at San Diego State University in cooperation with the World Health Organization.

Since the 3Es (education, enforcement, engineering) concept was proposed almost 100 years ago [1], we have known that effective policy formation, program development and research requires a multidisciplinary approach. The issues relevant to IPSP arise from at least 30 distinct professional disciplines (more if certain medical and engineering specialties are considered separately) [2]. Thus, SafetyLit draws its content from the scholarly publications of many disciplines, but selects articles that are relevant to the issues of injury prevention and safety promotion.

SafetyLit sources

SafetyLit staff and volunteers regularly examine (issue by issue) the contents of more than 3400 current scholarly journals. Another 3000-plus current journals are searched at least once per volume. When IPSP-relevant articles are found, they are added to the SafetyLit database and may be included in the SafetyLit *Weekly Update Bulletin*. In addition to prospectively following new publications, articles are being added from the backfiles of these current journals and an additional 2700 journals that are no longer being published.

SafetyLit tracks more than 140 journals that have more than half of their contents composed of ground transportation issues. SafetyLit currently includes articles from more than 4000 journals that are not included in MEDLINE/PubMed and at least 12 transportation journals (such as this one) that are not included in the US Transportation Research Board's TRID service.

Information about the journals indexed in SafetyLit is found in

the SafetyLit Journals Database that lists each journal title and current publisher; title abbreviation; both the print and electronic International Standard Serial Number (pISSN and eISSN); the range of years the journal has been published; the range of years that are included in SafetyLit; the number of articles from each journal issue; the journal's previous or subsequent titles; and a link to the journal's page on the publisher's website.

Each journal listing also includes a link to the Online Computer Library Center's WorldCat to facilitate finding nearby libraries with collections that include the journal. WorldCat is a union catalogue that itemises the collections of 71,000 libraries in 112 countries that participate in the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) global cooperative [3].

How are articles selected?

SafetyLit content is generally limited to injuries – regardless of intent – that occur over a short period of time, as opposed to the effects of repeated exposures to chemical agents or cumulative damage from repetitive motions. The SafetyLit vision is to include every article relevant to IPSP that is published in any journal that has its text or abstracts in English.

SafetyLit includes citations or summaries of reports about injury occurrence and risk factors. Articles are considered relevant if they concern any of the pre-event or event elements of the Haddon Matrix [4]; the epidemiology of injury; or the financial, personal, or societal costs or consequences of any injury or risk factor. Articles concerning treatment for injuries or complications of medical or surgical care are generally excluded except when the article also contains information on one of the inclusion criteria.

SafetyLit also includes reports on other topics that may help a reader to make decisions about research or prevention strategies and priorities. If an article meets these criteria, the process of selecting it for inclusion is simple – if the answer to any of the following questions is "yes", then the report is likely to be added:

- Do the SafetyLit reviewers find the report interesting?
- Has there been a recent news report about the article?
- Are SafetyLit readers likely to hear of a report from a colleague and want to respond knowledgeably?
- Are SafetyLit readers likely to be questioned about the report from a member of the population they serve?
- Does the report contain findings that are likely to be used to oppose the actions or recommendations of a SafetyLit reader?

SafetyLit strives to include reports from all sides of any issue. Reports summarised in each SafetyLit update are not screened for quality. Even when we believe that there are methodological errors that affect the research findings or when we disagree with the implications, we attempt to provide an objective summary of the report. Material in the 'comments' section of each report's summary is provided by the author(s) of the report – not by SafetyLit.

Using SafetyLit

The SafetyLit *Weekly Update Bulletin*

The *Weekly Update Bulletin* contains citations of 200-300 new journal articles. Clicking on the title of the article will provide more detail such as an abstract or a link to the full text if these are available. Articles are listed under 38 interest categories. The purpose of the categories within SafetyLit is to make it easy for subscribers to the *Weekly Update Bulletin* to limit their content only to the topics that are within the sphere of their interest.

Articles are assigned multiple categories based upon the answer to the question, "Might someone with an interest in (category) find this article useful or interesting?" For example, an article concerning a physiological basis for deep emotional depression could be assigned to the Suicide and Self-Harm category even if suicide is not mentioned in the article text.

The contents of the weekly update are available three ways:

1. A PDF file is posted each Monday before 0100 UTC to the SafetyLit website (www.safetylit.org). The current and past versions of the *Weekly Update Bulletin* may be found via the 'Browse archives' link. The PDF file contains bookmarks that allow a reader to jump directly to any category without needing to scroll through 50-plus pages of citations to get to their category of interest. Those who wish to do so may subscribe to an email notice that will alert them when the bulletin is available at an earlier hour.
2. The new week's citations and abstracts are available in html format at 0100 UTC each Monday by clicking on the 'View current abstracts' link from the SafetyLit home page. (After this time the previous week's material is only available by viewing the appropriate PDF file on the Browse Archives pages.) From here it is possible to scroll through all the week's citations and abstracts or to check selected tick boxes to limit the scope of articles to certain interest categories. A user may avoid the need to tick or un-tick categories by registering and signing up for a personalised custom listing of articles.
3. Each of the SafetyLit categories is available via RSS feed. A feed with an unduplicated listing (without categories) of all articles is also available. This allows readers to receive new articles throughout the week as they are entered into SafetyLit or at any interval (up to once per month) that they desire.

The SafetyLit database

The SafetyLit database contains more than 225,000 articles with

more than 1000 items being added each week. The database may be searched by author name or textword using the basic search screen or, if the advanced search screen is used, by author name, textword, hybrid index term, or journal using Boolean operators.

The hybrid index term search uses the SafetyLit thesaurus to allow a user the advantage of 'synonym ring' and hierarchical term searching. The synonym ring function allows a searcher to use a single textword such as 'baby walker' to substitute for doing a series of regular textword searches using the 15 other terms by which the device is known.

Work on the SafetyLit thesaurus is not finished, so the full hierarchical search system is not yet complete. However, some term hierarchies such as geographic area names are available for searching. For example, an index term search using 'Australia' will find articles that contain the words 'Canberra', 'Adelaide', or 'Perth', even if the SafetyLit records do not contain the word 'Australia'.

Until mid-January 2011, a query of the SafetyLit database could take up to a minute to produce results. Now, even a complex search using multiple terms and Boolean operators can produce results in three or four seconds.

Information from the SafetyLit database is available for direct download to bibliographic management software. Formats available include unAPI for the free Zotero system, as well as RIS and BibTeX formats.

References

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Note from the Managing Editor: In my email correspondence with David Lawrence over the past year, he has made a number of comments. I have excerpted a few below, as I thought they may be of interest to journal readers.

JACRS indexing in SafetyLit

Articles from the most recent issues of *JACRS* have been included in the SafetyLit *Weekly Update Bulletin*. I very much enjoy reading your articles. Each of the peer-reviewed research articles has been quite interesting and I find your news articles useful. I have been particularly impressed with your authors' knowledge of the relevant literature as evidenced by the thorough lists of references. The addition of these recent issues will bring SafetyLit up to date from 2007 forward. Articles from 2005 and 2006 will be included in the SafetyLit archive database.

Coverage of conference proceedings in SafetyLit

SafetyLit has always tried to include abstracts of the complete conference proceedings for international traffic safety-related organisations. Often, this is an important source for information because many important presentations never end up as articles in scholarly journals. Currently, SafetyLit is the only source (free or subscription-based) of the entire AAAM proceedings with author abstracts. By the end of March we should have the complete Stapp and IRCOBI proceedings. Again, although several databases contain some of the proceedings (and those that do contain them have serious errors with the authors and missing page numbers), no other database

has the complete proceedings. By the end of April we should have the complete proceedings of the International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety.

I found several years of the Australian Road Safety Research, Education and Policing conferences online and will begin adding them. I noticed that the US Transportation Research Board's TRID database has some but not all of these conference abstracts online. We will begin adding full proceedings with author abstracts from these conferences. If you or your readers have suggestions for other conference proceedings that we should add, please contact me at david.lawrence@sdsu.edu and I will try to include them.

ACRS comments on the Draft National Road Safety Strategy

The ACRS has made a formal submission to the Draft National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020. Although the ACRS welcomes the proposed Safe System approach and the inclusion of serious injuries in its target, the submission also makes a number of criticisms of the draft.

Excerpts from the ACRS submission follow, including introductory remarks, some positives of the Draft, limited attention to linkages and synergies, and the executive summary. The full ACRS submission to the Draft National Strategy is at <http://www.acrs.org.au/srcfiles/ACRS-submission-to-NRSC-Feb-2011.pdf>

Introduction

The Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) is an independent body for those working in or interested in road safety. Members include engineers, epidemiologists, road trauma specialists, researchers, driver trainers, enforcement agencies, psychologists, policy makers, industry representatives, motoring associations, insurance companies and many others who have a stake in road safety.

ACRS offers the following comments on the Draft National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 (the Draft).

ACRS has for many years recommended improvements in national road safety. Its *2004 Yearbook*, with expert views on what should be done in the next seven years to achieve the target of reducing the national road toll, included measures discussed in the Draft, e.g., inclusion of injuries as an indicator and the issue of speed. In 2009-2010 in the lead up to the production of the Draft, ACRS ran seminars [1] and focused on the upcoming strategy in its quarterly journal, using the comments of several of the most eminent road safety practitioners and researchers in Australia.

ACRS therefore welcomes the opportunity for formal consultation in relation to the Draft. ACRS was grateful for the lengthy telephone conversation with those responsible for the Draft on 20 January 2011. The comments here are based in part on the information contained in the Draft itself and also on

the conversation that took place.

Some positives of the Draft

ACRS commends the Draft for the inclusion of serious injuries in the overall casualty reduction target (page 12), as the issue was given very little attention in the previous strategy. The definition of the injuries and specific reduction targets, whether to vehicle passengers or other road users, should be specified. ACRS also commends the Safe System as the organising framework for the Draft and the development of the program around its principles (pages 11-12).

As an advocate of evidence-based action, ACRS considers that the 'Research and Modelling' section of the Draft is vital, but inclusion of the material in this section rather than its production on request of limited data for public analysis would have been preferable to enable a more thorough examination than has been possible in the timeframe available to ACRS. Additionally, more information about the selection of the policy scenarios put forward, particularly in relation to others that might have been considered but were discarded, would add credibility.

The Draft's recognition (page 9) that drivers make mistakes and that greater emphasis should be placed on initiatives that improve the inherent safety of the road safety system (that the introduction of seat belts, ESC, traffic lights, roundabouts, etc., do – that is, engineer the driver out of the system) is welcomed. Also welcome is the recognition (page 13) of system managers' roles, i.e., a primary responsibility to provide a safe operating environment. These two statements are not, however, examined to explore possible remediation mechanisms for system managers who fail to provide a safe operating system, just as drivers are often penalised when they fail.

Limited attention to linkages and synergies

The most common expression of dissatisfaction with the Draft by members was in relation to the limited attention given by the Draft to linkages and synergies (p 13). The EU