



Facts:

- Each year several hundred thousand people die world wide from small arms and landmine-related injuries.
- Millions more suffer non-fatal injuries due to these weapons, often with permanent sequelae.
- The highest rates of small arms-related deaths are found among people between the ages of 15 and 29 and among persons more than 80 years of age.
- It is estimated that 1 of every 236 people in Cambodia is an amputee and that 1 of every 10 adult males in Afghanistan is a landmine victim.

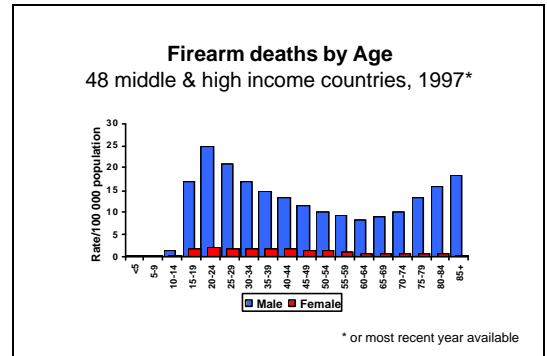
Small Arms, Landmines and Health

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



Impact of Small Arms and Landmines on Health

The excessive availability and use of small arms leads to an increase in deaths and non-fatal injuries during conflict, assaults, suicide attempts as well as accidents. Landmines and small arms continue to maim and kill long after wars have ended. These weapons also cause mental health consequences for victims and their families. In addition, small arms and landmines cause a substantial burden on the health sector (surgery, prolonged hospitalisation, long-term disability). The economic costs associated with injuries from small arms and landmines are estimated to be in the billions of dollars each year.



Surveillance

Statistics on weapon-related injuries are often based on extrapolations because data are difficult to collect. Data are crucial for the development of appropriate interventions, impact evaluation, and optimal use of resources.

Study on the Impact of Small Arms on Global Health: WHO has initiated a three-year global study on the impact of small arms on health. The goals of this project are to describe the impact of small arms on health world wide, improve upon

capacities to conduct research in the countries surveyed, and initiate/strengthen existing networks on weapons and health.

Surveillance on Injuries due to Landmines: WHO co-ordinated the development of standards for data collection on landmine injuries and has been providing technical assistance to countries for implementing the guidelines.

A training module for data collection on injuries, has been developed.

Political Processes

WHO contribution to the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons:

WHO will present initial findings on mortality caused by small arms using data currently available from WHO databases. WHO also provides input into the Programme of Action, advocating for a science-based approach.

WHO Support to the Ottawa Process:

The WHO-ICRC strategy calls for an integrated approach to landmine victim assistance. Based on the underlying principle of equity, this strategy advocates for the establishment of surveillance systems and the provision of assistance to all victims whatever the cause of injury. A Strategic Framework was developed to facilitate the implementation of this strategy in countries.

Health Systems Response

WHO works with Member States to strengthen pre-hospital care systems, since the appropriate and timely medical management of injuries can save hundreds of thousands of lives. WHO is in the

process of developing guidelines for pre-hospital care systems. In addition, WHO is providing training and technical assistance at the country-level.

Key Contact



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