

DH releases Unintentional Injury Survey Report

The Department of Health (DH) today (August 18) released the Report of Unintentional Injury Survey 2018, the second comprehensive study to assess the epidemiology of unintentional injuries (commonly known as accidents) in Hong Kong after the previous survey conducted in 2008. The Report analyses and gives an account of the patterns and characteristics of unintentional injuries across genders and life stages, and offers preventive recommendations to the community.

"Adopting appropriate safety measures can prevent injuries and limit the physical harm caused by injury episodes," a spokesman for the DH said.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Action Plan to Strengthen Prevention of Unintentional Injuries in Hong Kong published in 2015, the DH conducted face-to-face interviews with 14 204 land-based non-institutional persons from 5 394 households in Hong Kong between September 2018 and July 2019 to collect details of up to three of the most serious injury episodes they had encountered in the 12 months before enumeration. The household response rate was 72.5 per cent.

The study estimated that 4.4 per cent of the population had sustained one injury episode or more in the 12 months before enumeration, compared to 6.2 per cent in 2008. Among all the estimated injury episodes, the most common main causes were falls (39.4 per cent), sprains (26.2 per cent) and being struck (13.3 per cent). The elderly was the group with the highest proportion in both sustained unintentional injuries and requiring hospitalisation after unintentional injuries.

The study also identified factors associated with an increased rate of injury, including the following:

1. Having long-term functional difficulties;
2. Living alone;
3. Having chronic health conditions; and
4. Regularly drinking or engaging in binge drinking.

In view of the findings, the general public are advised to:

1. Always stay alert even at home, which is the most common place of injury episodes;
2. Assess environmental potential hazards and modify the environment to prevent injury. Falls are the most common cause of injuries and are preventable by environmental modification, such as in ensuring adequate lighting, removing objects on the ground to avoid tripping over them, and using anti-slip mats;

3. Avoid physical over-exertion during exercise, which was commonly reported as a direct cause of sports-related injuries;
4. Follow a healthy lifestyle and avoid drinking, which will increase the risk of injury;
5. Do regular physical activities to strengthen muscles and co-ordination to prevent injury, in particular from falls among the elderly;
6. Seek advice from a family doctor/healthcare professional when having chronic health conditions or functional disabilities; and
7. Provide visit and social support to persons living alone.

For access to the Report and more information, please visit www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/report_of_unintentional_injury_survey_2018_en.pdf.