

## INJURY INDICATORS

### GUEST EDITORIAL

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This is the first of two issues dedicated to injury surveillance and prevention in New South Wales. Injury prevention is gaining appropriate recognition as a public health priority, both nationally and within NSW. The current estimated burden on health care and other community resources due to injuries in NSW is \$4.4 billion annually. In this issue, the articles look at measuring the size and nature of potential causal factors associated with injuries. Through this collection of articles, we can see how surveillance data can be used to monitor public health problems, identify potential risk factors, inform the planning of prevention opportunities and evaluate the strategies adopted.

The feature article on firearm injuries in NSW provides a valuable assessment of this public health problem prior to the introduction of new gun laws following the 1996 Port Arthur massacre. The article describes the epidemiology of deaths and hospital separations caused by firearms in the five-year period preceding the introduction of the new laws. In the future, comparing these data with data collected since July 1997 will allow us to assess the impact of the new legislation. The following article considers the size, nature and location of injuries to children in south eastern Sydney. The final article looks at how injury surveillance databases can be utilised to provide insight into potential risk or protective factors associated with injuries, in this case for head injuries in young children.

The next issue in this series will focus on injury prevention in action at state and local levels. ☞

*continued on page 2*

## CONTENTS

- 73 Editorial: Injury indicators
- 74 Firearm injury and death in NSW
- 79 Childhood injury surveillance: The value of emergency department data
- 82 Head injuries in infants: A closer look at baby-walkers, stairs and nursery furniture
- 84 Families First: A support network for families raising children
- 85 Infectious diseases: July
- 85 Rabies death from dog bite in China
- 88 NSW influenza surveillance activity update
- 89 Vaccines delivered directly to your door
- 89 The 1998 Measles Control Campaign in NSW