

## **Introducing the Play Safe Initiative and the Web Interfaced Surveillance Enterprise<sup>1</sup>**

Following the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport's (MHPS) lead in promoting the benefits of physical activity and the prevention of injury, the collaboration of cross-sectoral leaders comprising the Play Safe Initiative (PSI) is committed to safe and healthy participation in physical activity, in sport, recreation, and education environments. Utilizing relevant technology to build a Web-enabled Injury Surveillance Enterprise (WISE), the PSI will provide the knowledge and exchange platform necessary to inform policy, programming and change attitudes towards injury in sport.

A first step in creating injury prevention programs is collecting relevant, accurate, and reliable data that help develop our understanding of the characteristics of injury prevalence. Currently, a widely accepted, consistently referenced system for reporting, analyzing, and evaluating unintentional injuries within many contexts such as recreational activities, and/or organized sport, does not exist. WISE is a computer gateway that enables individuals to explore the dynamics of injury prevention from both a research perspective and from the perspective of injury prevention program development. WISE has been designed as an injury prevention and knowledge mobilization system based on web applications for collecting, collaborating, analyzing, and sharing injury prevention information.

WISE is being developed as an interdisciplinary information processing system that will not only collect data about specific injury conditions, but will provide information directly to the community of stakeholders, including researchers, physicians, therapists, and trainers, as well as policy makers, administrators, and coaches/teachers, parents, participants, officials, and both government and NGO personnel. Through the development of the WISE system, stakeholders will have the ability to recognize the magnitude of the injury condition within their scope of practice. The WISE system has the potential to provide research support to studies of injury cause, injury burden, and injury prevention across the lifespan, and as such will be a valuable tool for researchers, sports and recreational agency administrators, as well as coaches and parents.

Given the specific intention to advance systems of injury surveillance<sup>2</sup>, the PSI and WISE system is important to sport and recreation because not only does it address the three core principles of the Sport Legacy Research Consortium, it will also:

- Bring together key stakeholders to address the issue of injury within the scope of their work & in relation to each other;
- Enable researchers to monitor injury prevalence & evaluate the magnitude of injury morbidity, mortality & disability as a public health concern;
- Identify characteristics that lead to temporal trends in injury outcomes;

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<sup>1</sup> An abstract for submission to SPORT LEGACIES RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

<sup>2</sup> STIPDA: Injury Surveillance Workgroup 5. *Consensus recommendations for injury surveillance in state health departments*. State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association, Atlanta, GA. 2007.

- Provide reports of prevalence of injury-related risk behaviours within designated cohorts;
- Provide valuable information to support injury prevention priorities;
- Identify mechanisms of causation, risk factors, at-risk individuals, or geographic location, while also identifying new and emerging injury hazards;
- Evaluate the efficacy of prevention programs or control measures, and promote and evaluate policy to determine need for change;
- Facilitate the development of injury research with particular attention to developing an understanding of the influence of social, economic, and physical inputs while recognizing influences and interactions.

PSI and WISE will continue to evolve from work generously supported by the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation and is currently being developed in pilot studies involving a variety of sport and recreational activities.

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