

REPORT
International Seminar on
“Child Injury Prevention – Child Violence Prevention – Child
Mental Health Promotion”

4 – 5 June 2009
Prague, Czech Republic

OPENING OF THE SEMINAR – WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Mr. Ivo Hartmann, MBA, General Director for Economic and International Affairs – Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic, welcomed Czech Minister for Human Rights and Minorities, representatives of General Health Insurance Company, WHO Country Office and all other participants. He introduced the agenda and the aim of the international seminar, which was held under the auspices of the Czech Presidency of the European Union.

MAIN TOPICS AND JOINT CHALLENGES

The seminar was focused on the issue of child violence, injury prevention, and child mental health promotion with an emphasis on synchronizing related strategies into a systematic health policy. Special attention was given to the child injury data collection system, Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) syndrome and transformation of the care of children up to 3 years of age without family background.

Within the context of child and youth mental health promotion session, the main discussed topics were changes in behaviour and development of healthy habits. Furthermore, launching of the WHO EURO initiative in connection to the “European Report on Child Injury Prevention” was also presented within the seminar.

Aforementioned seminar, which was organized in cooperation with WHO EURO, was specifically oriented on WHO EURO ministerial focal persons for VIP (i.e. Violence and Injury Prevention) and relevant experts at local, regional, and national level.

In accordance with the implementation of the WHO Resolution EUR/RC55/R9 and the Council Recommendation on the Prevention of Injury and the Promotion of Safety 2007, the

content of the seminar was focused on the dissemination of good practices and provision of political tools needed for achieving of national goals within the area of injury and violence prevention and child safety. This seminar was dealt also with the implementation of relevant tasks in connection to the Biennial Collaborative Agreement (BCA) between the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic and WHO EURO for the years 2008-2009.

Moreover, the seminar was held as a part of the national public campaign entitled "Stop Child Violence", which was endorsed by the Czech government and proclaimed in the "National Strategy on Child Violence Prevention" of the Czech Republic for the period 2008 – 2018.

PLENARY SESSION I – SUMMARY

Child injuries are one of the most significant public health issues which should be given by appropriate attention.

- Injuries represent a serious health, economic, and social problem all over the world.
- Injuries are the most common cause of death among children.
- Traffic accidents cause the most serious child injuries. Children are most commonly injured at or near home, during sports, and at school.
- The differences in the prevalence of child injuries between countries are broad mainly because of the varying levels of prevention.
- The frequency and seriousness of child injuries are influenced by socio-economic factors.
- The basis for suitable injury management and prevention is the collection of valid data on the place, time, type, cause and circumstances of the injury event.

According to the "European Report on Child Injury Prevention", action should be taken in the following areas:

- Promotion of child injury prevention and reinforcement of child health and development.
- Development and implementation of national child injury prevention strategies and action plans.
- Implementation of best practices and exchange of knowledge and experience.
- Improvement of healthcare for injured children.
- Collection of valid and comparable – within the EU – injury data required for implementation of prevention measures.
- Research, studies and projects focused on child injury prevention.
- Education and awareness in the area of child injury.

- Elimination of injustice and inequality in areas pertaining to child injuries.

PLENARY SESSION II – SUMMARY

Child abuse is a violation of children’s rights. Child abuse is unacceptable in any form.

- Child abuse is a global issue.
- The main risk factors behind all forms of child abuse are alcohol misuse and a combination of socio-economic factors (e.g. poverty, poor living conditions, and unemployment).
- Child abuse is preventable. Effective prevention measures must be based on a detailed analysis of valid data.

It is recommended to take actions in the following areas:

- Development and implementation of national child abuse prevention strategies and action plans aimed at eradicating child abuse and minimising risk factors.
- Improving the healthcare system for children with a focus on the social aspects of health and the early detection of child abuse.
- Collection of valid data comparable within the EU.
- Transformation of institutional care to childcare centre type facilities.
- Cross-field and intersectoral cooperation at the national, regional, and local level.
- Child abuse prevention activities and promotion of the mental health of children and their development.
- Positive upbringing (i.e. education) of children; development of child-friendly families, schools, and society.
- Implementation of best practices and exchange of knowledge and experience.
- Research, studies, and projects focused on child abuse prevention.
- Education and awareness in the area of child abuse prevention.

CLOSING OF THE SEMINAR

Dr. Stanislava Pánová, Director of the Department of Health Services of Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic, expressed her thanks to all participants for their presence and comprehensive reports and contributions.

In conclusion of the international seminar, the below mentioned “DECLARATION” was endorsed:

DECLARATION
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The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that one of the fundamental rights of children is the right to a healthy and safe environment, free from injury and violence. No form of violence against children is acceptable. The participants of the international seminar acknowledge that:

- injuries to children and violence against children rank among the most important public health problems and deserve due attention;
- the main risk factors for injuries to children and violence against children are socio-economic (e.g. poverty, poor housing conditions, unemployment, and alcohol);
- the common denominators of injuries to children, violence against children and the mental health of children are shared risk factors, social aspects and also their preventability, which are the subject of a common “provision-protection-participation” approach and strategy.

In the field of the prevention of injuries to children and violence against children it is essential to actively promote the following:

- the development and implementation of national strategies and action plans for the prevention of injuries to children and violence against children with a view to achieving the maximum possible reduction in child mortality as a consequence of injury, stopping the increase in and reducing the incidence of injuries to children, especially serious injuries and injuries with permanent consequences, and eradicating violence against children in all its forms;
- improving the system of children’s healthcare, focusing on the social aspects of health, early detection of violence against children and the availability of high-quality medical services;
- gathering and sharing valid data compatible within the EU and with existing EU Injury DataBase-IDB;
- transforming institutional care into children’s centre-type facilities;
- promoting children’s mental health and promoting healthy lifestyles;
- a positive approach to children’s upbringing, building child-friendly families, schools and societies;
- prevention-related research, studies and projects, with results serving to reduce the gaps between science and policy;
- implementing best practices, sharing know-how and experiences;
- interdisciplinary and intersectoral cooperation at national, regional, and local level;

- endorsement of cooperation and exchange of good practices at the EU level, focusing on closer cooperation within the framework of the Visegrad Agreement and among new EU Member States;
- education and awareness-raising among the expert and lay public.

In the field of the prevention of injuries to children and violence against children it is essential:

- to respect and assert “the best interests of children” in everyday political practice and to formulate suitable concepts, policies, and strategies in all areas;
- to widen the legal responsibility of parents, communities, regions, and the state in the health and safety of children;
- to pay due and constant attention to the issue of children’s injuries prevention, violence against children and mental health promotion in particular in the relevant of the Member States’ EU Presidencies;
- to implement the EU Council Recommendation on the Prevention of Injury and Promotion of Safety 2007.