Unintentional Injuries;
Hospital admissions: Year ending 31 March 2013
Deaths: Year ending 31 December 2012
Publication date – 25 February 2014

About this Release
Unintentional injuries can occur in any age group, but children and the elderly are more vulnerable. The term “unintentional injury” is preferred to “accidents” as “accident” implies that events are inevitable and unavoidable whereas a high proportion of these incidents are in fact preventable.

This publication summarises information on hospital admissions and deaths related to unintentional injuries and assaults. The information comes from hospital administrative systems across Scotland, up to and including the financial year 2012/13 and from death registrations sourced from National Records of Scotland, up to and including calendar year 2012.

Key Points
- Unintentional injuries accounted for approximately 1 in 8 emergency hospital admissions for children and 1 in 10 for adults in Scotland in 2012/2013.
- There were 53,371 emergency admissions to hospital in Scotland for unintentional injuries in 2012/13. This is a decrease of approximately 2% on the previous year.
- There were 1,629 deaths in Scotland in 2012 due to unintentional injury, 14 in children under the age of 15 and 1,615 in adults aged 15 years and over.
- There were 33,129 emergency admissions to hospital due to falls in Scotland in 2012/13. This represents 62% of the total number of emergency admissions to hospital due to unintentional injuries.
- Children and adults in the most deprived areas are more likely than children and adults in the least deprived areas to have an emergency admission to hospital for an unintentional injury.

Background
Information on unintentional injuries for children mainly focuses on three main age groups where the type of injury reflects the child’s stage of development, changing perception of
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danger, types of activity and levels of responsibility. Information for adults mainly focuses on five age groups with those aged 75+ being separated, as they are more susceptible to injury. Some of the main types of unintentional injuries are road traffic accidents (RTAs), poisoning, falls, striking injuries, crushing injuries, scald injuries and accidental exposure to other and unspecified causes. In this publication assaults are presented separately from data on unintentional injuries.

In the February 2013 publication separate categories for location of injury (home and other) were removed due to concerns over quality and completeness. Although there are still issues with the recording of this information, particularly the large numbers of ‘unknown’ or ‘unspecified’ cases, we have reintroduced additional categories for location of injury in this publication following additional consultation with users of the data. It should be noted that these categories are different to the categories used in the publications prior to 2013 and are considered to be more informative for users. See Appendix A1 in full publication report for more information.

It should also be noted that there has been an update to the way deaths from unintentional injury are coded. This affects the deaths data from 2011 onwards and means that deaths previously classified as ‘mental and behavioural disorders’ are now counted under ‘accidental poisoning’ where appropriate. National Records of Scotland (NRS) estimated this increased the total number of deaths as a result of an unintentional injury from 1,247 to 1,629 in 2012. Care is required when comparing the statistics for 2011 onwards with the figures for earlier years, as previous years figures have not been revised.

Contact
Celina Davis
Principle Information Analyst
celina.davis@nhs.net
0131 275 6199

Jodie Hope
Information Analyst
jodie.hope@nhs.net
0131 275 7495

Further Information
Further information can be found in the Full Publication Report or on the ISD website.

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Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up. Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland - and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government Health Department and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

Official Statistics
Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of ‘Official Statistics’. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

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