

Miller, Diane M. (CDC/NIOSH/EID)

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Comments

I would like to comment on the NIOSH Childhood Agricultural Injury Initiative. There are two things in the report in particular that caught my attention. One is surveillance – This is so important and yet it seems to be so difficult to achieve a good surveillance program for agricultural injuries. Surveillance comes up at just about every meeting I attend. I would recommend that NIOSH put some money in NASS to get a better handle on non-fatal injuries. The Trauma Injury system in Iowa is lacking when it comes to agricultural injuries and though the State Health Department now has a person to coordinate the collection of Occupational Injury it is woefully lacking to the SPRAINS system Iowa had from 1989-1999. The other startling statistic that caught my eye was the leading cause of death for 16-19 year olds was suicide. I think it point to the lack of behavioral health care providers in rural areas and the stigma attached to admitting one has stress and depression. I would like to see some studies funded on the prevalence of depression in farm youth age 14 – 19.

Having survived growing up on a farm with 5 siblings with neighbors who raised 15 children on the farm without anything more serious than a broken collar bone or arm, I wonder about farm families who do NOT have a child fatality. What are their supervision patterns, rule making, decision making, risk perception that allowed them to avoid injuries.

I think we need more hard hitting social marketing campaigns like the one NCCRAHS did to “keep kids off tractors”. This was an excellent media campaign, but it needs to be done over and over again with new images and new angles to get change the culture. Possibly, providing funding for a grassroots public education campaign using letters to the editor, exhibits at fairs, parades, farm shows, recommendations from Farm Bureau, Iowa Farmer’s Union, 4-H, FFA, etc.

Lastly, I want to thank the health and safety professionals working in the field of Childhood Agricultural Safety. Resources are now becoming available and the dissemination has started. I would like to see more R2P projects funded to get these products into the hands of farmers in a form they can and will use.