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# LIFE-COURSE EXPERIENCE OF HOSPITALISED INJURIES IN A RURAL GREEK TOWN DURING THE LAST CENTURY: THE VELESTINO STUDY

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**Background** Lessons from the past regarding the impact of social and technological changes on injury profiles provide inexpensive and meaningful reflections in assessing policies and projects delivered for injury prevention.

**Objective** To depict the nearly one-century long, life-course injury experience of seniors residing in Velestino, a Greek agricultural town, and comment on the transitional patterns following historical and socio-cultural events.

**Methods** Given the lack of individualised electronic/paper records during the study period, the life-course experience of 124 injuries, sustained by 116 study subjects and hospital treated, has been reported to two treating physicians by all (N=643) eligible residents of Velestino, aged 65–102 years, who participated in a health and safety of seniors study.

**Results** The proportion of injuries by gender was >24% among males and 13% among females, with eight residents reporting hospitalisation for more than one events. The overrepresentation of males is no surprise since the given time-span includes periods of war (dominant cause during the 1940s) and manual labor accidents, thereafter (increases related to familiarisation with introduction of tractors in

agriculture during the 1960s and steep decline in the past 15 years). Traffic accidents emerge as leading injury cause in the second half of the century (50%) following construction of driveways, whereas home injuries are a significant cause only over the past decade.

**Significance** In retrospect, patterns of injuries seem predictable and mostly preventable within their historical context, were effective prevention programmes to have been implemented. This study offers a plausible framework for injury research in resource-limited settings.