

0444 YOUTH VIOLENCE AND KNIVES IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION

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Introduction Injuries and violence are the leading cause of death in youth aged 10–29 years in the WHO European Region. Among these interpersonal violence is the third leading cause of injury death. There is growing concern about violence due to knives.

Aim and Methods The purpose of the paper is to present the scale of the problem of youth violence related to knives, to describe the policy priority afforded to it, and the evidence based measures available. Information had been obtained from WHO information sources, a systematic review of the literature and a survey of health ministry focal persons to determine policy developments and implementation.

Results Data from 36 participating countries from the Region show that there were 2280 youth homicides from knives, making up 34% of all youth homicides (range 7–80%) and that mortalities are twice higher in low- to middle-income countries compared to high-income countries and 2.4 times higher in males compared to females. Half the respondent countries reported that knives were a problem, but this only received political priority in three countries. Although the evidence base specific to knife violence prevention is limited, that for youth violence prevention is growing. The majority of these programmes are multisectoral.

Conclusions This emphasizes that greater policy priority needs to be given to this leading cause of death and disfigurement. The health sector needs to commit more to the implementation of effective programmes and to engage with other stakeholders in a multisectoral response to prevent youth violence.