

INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF MEDICAL DATA ON INTENTIONAL INJURIES PROVIDED TO THE LIBERIAN ARMED VIOLENCE OBSERVATORY

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Background The Liberian Armed Violence Observatory (LAVO) was formed as an independent body that gathers, analyses and reports on armed violence data in Liberia. The Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is a key data provider to the LAVO, supplying Emergency Department (ED) data from several hospitals in Monrovia. Research indicates a large number of Liberians are being injured by violence, but only a small number are recorded in the hospital records.

Purpose To improve the quantity and quality of data from hospitals on intentional injuries reported to LAVO.

Methods International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) designed and implemented in three Liberian hospitals a data collection tool to capture intentional injuries seen in the EDs. The tool is simple to use—a small sticker that creates a space on the patient's file to record answers to questions routinely asked during the collection of the patient history. The tool does not delay patient treatment or negatively impact the functioning of the ED. The intent is that the data is transferred regularly to the ED attendance register, collated, and faxed monthly to LAVO.

Results Currently the data collection system is being trialled in three hospitals in Liberia but has not been fully implemented. IPPNW staff will aim to improve the quantity and quality of data collected in an on-site audit planned for August 2012.

Significance Lack of regular reporting by hospitals to LAVO on intentional injuries prevents the formulation of fully informed evidence-based violence prevention programmes and policies.