Injury causes a range of physical, cognitive and psychological disabilities that seriously affect the quality of life of individuals, people and their families.

- Injury is the principal cause of death in people under 45, a leading cause of mortality, morbidity and permanent disability in Australia, and a major source of health care costs.
- Almost 7.4% of all deaths occurring in Australia in 2005-06 resulted from an injury (or external cause of injury), about 27 per day.
- Injury accounted for over 1 in 20 of all hospitalisations in Australia in 2007-08, with almost 426,000 injury hospitalisations. (Australia’s health 2010 pages: 196-198, June 2010).

Which are the high risk groups?
A variety of factors increase a person's risk of being injured. Prominent among these are age, sex, alcohol use, residence, ethnicity, socio-economic status and occupation. These personal risk factors influence the type of 'external' cause of injury that occurs, such as falls, poisoning, drowning and so forth.

Incidence rates of serious injury are higher for males than females, both overall and for most types of injury.

However, the average length of stay in hospital is longer for females than males, reflecting the large number of older females hospitalised for hip fractures. (Australia’s health 2010 pages: 194-196, June 2010)

What are the major external causes?
The pattern of injury varies significantly with age. Near-drowning and drowning are major causes of injury and death in early childhood (a stage at which a child is unable to swim and unable to recognise the dangers of water). Self-harm and road crashes are primary causes of injury in young adulthood. Falls are the most common cause of injury death among the elderly due to the high susceptibility to trauma.

Overall, where the type of activity was specified, the highest proportions of cases occurred while playing sports (10.2%) or while working for income (6.3%).

This pattern varied between males and females: 13.5% of males were injured while engaged in sports compared with 5.5% of females; and 9.4% of males were injured while working for income compared with only 2.1% of females. Females were more likely to be injured while resting, sleeping, eating or engaging in other vital activities (7.2%) compared with 3.3% of males (Hospital separations due to injury and poisoning, Australia 2005-06 pages: 15-17, September 2010).