Lessons learned from Hazardous Chemical Incidents – Louisiana Hazardous Substances Emergency Events Surveillance (HSEES) System

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Abstract
Since 2001, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH) has participated in the Hazardous Substances Emergency Events Surveillance (HSEES) system. In 2001, there were 815 events qualified for HSEES surveillance. Data for each event was gathered and analyzed. During these hazardous substances events, there were 1164 chemicals released resulting in injuries to 63 people, most with respiratory system irritation. Even though more people were injured in fixed-facility events, injuries were more likely to result from transportation-related events. The quantity and frequency of hazardous substance releases do not always positively correlate with the number of injuries sustained during those releases. A higher percentage of “Rail” transport events was observed in Louisiana when compared with other HSEES states. By collecting and analyzing more data and disseminating results to the public, it is expected that further adverse public health consequences from hazardous releases/spills in Louisiana can be reduced and/or minimized.

Keywords: HSEES; Louisiana; surveillance; emergency release; hazardous chemicals