Suicides and other fatalities from train-person collisions on Swedish railroads; a descriptive epidemiologic analysis as a basis for systems-oriented prevention

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Abstract

Problem: Suicide is a dominating, although hidden, safety problem on Swedish railroads. The aim of this paper is to describe the epidemiology of fatal train-person collisions as a basis for systems-oriented prevention. Method: Data on collision circumstances were collected from narrative reports at the Swedish National Rail Administration. Results: The events were evenly distributed by months and weekdays, however most suicides occur in day-time while unintentional events usually occur at night. Most train-person collisions happened in densely populated areas, and 75% of the suicide victims were waiting on the track before the collision. Significance test between types of injury event (suicide, accident or unknown intent) showed small or no differences. Conclusion: Traditional approaches to accident prevention by systems modification seem largely applicable to combat railroad suicide as well. Impact on industry: Our findings show promising preventive potentials.

Keywords: railroad; railway; suicide; prevention; injury; accident