

Analysis of medical certification of deaths by trauma in Chile Certificación médica de las defunciones por traumatismos en los Servicios de Salud de Chile

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Background: Trauma in the third cause of death in Chile and the most important among youngsters.

Aim: To analyze the certification of deaths by trauma, studying those deaths in which it is not known if they were accidental or self inflicted. **Material and methods:** Deaths certified as caused by trauma, poisoning or violence during the period 1992-1994 are analyzed. Those in which their accidental or self inflicted nature was ignored were specially considered. **Results:** During the study period, 26.886 f 225.796 deaths were certified as caused by trauma, poisoning or violence. In 41.7% of these deaths, no defined cause (accidental or self inflicted) was reported: In the Metropolitan region 65.3% of deaths by trauma were not defined. Ninety seven percent of certificates in this area were extended by pathologists or coroners. In all health services, there was a positive correlation between the percentage of ill defined deaths by trauma and the percentage of certifications by pat