“While We Were Sleeping”
Success Stories in Injury Prevention
U Cal Press (2009)

David Hemenway, PhD
Harvard Injury Control Research Center

November 2010
While We Were Sleeping:

- 64 documented successes
- 36 heroes

Explain “What is Public Health?” and “What is Public Health Approach?”
The Elves and the Shoemaker
Public Health/Prevention
often unrecognized
Maurice Hilleman
(1919-2005)
Public Health Approach

- Prevention (pro-active vs. reactive)
- Community (vs. one-at-a-time)
- No fault/blame
- Systems Failure
Injury & Violence Prevention
Death Rates For Leading Causes Among Youths Aged 12--19 Years United States,

Source: MMWR 2010
Categories

- Road
- Home
- Play
- Work
- Nature
- Violence
- Medicine
Motor Vehicles
Hugh deHaven
(1895-1980)
John Paul Stapp
(1910-1999)

Using Air Force facilities to investigate Motor vehicle crashes
Dr. William Haddon, Jr
(1926-1985)

“Where are the studies?”
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Human</th>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>Environment</th>
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<td>Pre-event</td>
<td>Graduated Driver Licensing</td>
<td>Third Brake Light</td>
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<td>Event</td>
<td>Collapsible Steering Column</td>
<td>Crash Cushion</td>
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Evaluate and Roll Out
Third Brake Light

1977-80
Randomized control trial
taxicabs
telephone company cars

Rear-end collisions while braking fall 50%
Collapsible Steering Column

• Risk of driver death in frontal crash falls 12%
Highway Crash Cushions

• Reduce death in crashes by 70%
Home
Kenneth Feldman, Murray Katcher
Tap Water Scalds

• Seattle child scalds fall from 5.5/year in 1970s to 2.3/year in the 1980s
Andrew McGuire
Fire-Safer Cigarettes

• New York 2004
• Canada 2005
• California 2006
By 2011, 50 states
Citizens Against Fire Safe Cigarettes

Are your cigarettes going out?
Are you coughing and feeling sick?

There is a reason for this. You are smoking Fire Safe Cigarettes (FSC) that are not safe at all, not safe for your health or your home!
Play
Harvard Football, 1905

In one year, injuries tumble:
Fractures
29 to 5

Dislocations
28 to 3

Concussions
19 to 4
Paul Vinger, Tom Pashby
Hockey Eye Injuries

1972:
287 eye injuries
20 blind eyes

2000:
6 eye injuries
1 blind eye
Barbara Barlow
Playground Injuries in Harlem

- 1988 2x national average
- 1998 ½ national average
Work
Building the Golden Gate Bridge

Expected deaths 35+

Actual deaths 11
Phossy Jaw
John B. Andrews
Paul O’Neill
Violence
Suicide in the Air Force
(deaths per 100,000)

1994: 16.4
1999: 3.5
DC Metro

Murder, rape, robbery, assault 75% lower than in comparable cities
Medicine
Anesthesia

From early 1980s to late 1990s, deaths fell 98%!
Models

Sweden: Child Injuries
Injury and Violence

• Still a major health problem

• Predictable patterns, usually preventable

• Good data and research crucial
Public Health

• Public health prevention matters

• Individuals & institutions can (& have) made a difference

• Change takes longer than hoped

• Neither fame nor fortune
The Elves and the Shoemaker

Public Health never sleeps and deserves your support.
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