

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 29th JANUARY 2008

Question

Would the Minister advise whether his Department keeps statistics relating to car whiplash injuries and, if so, would he give figures for each of the last five years?

Answer

I would like to advise the Deputy and, indeed other States Members, that injuries, illnesses and diseases are described in precise clinical terms. This is because clinicians can then use these very precise terms when they discuss individual cases – or indeed, the incidence of specific injuries, illnesses and diseases within a given community. The clinical data therefore, is not readily susceptible to lay terms such as “whiplash injuries”. (A recent question from a States Member about “alcohol related injuries” was difficult to address for the same reason).

Having said this, a “whiplash” injury normally presents in the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department as an injury to the spine, in particular to the cervical spine. Such an injury is coded as either a soft tissue injury to the cervical spine or a sprain, strain, ligament, tendon or muscle injury to the cervical spine.

Count of Attendance arrival date 1st diagnostic code	Anatomical site code 1	Year					Grand Total
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
LOCAL SOFT TISSUE INJURY	CERVICAL SPINE	16	15	10	5	4	50
	DORSAL SPINE	1	1		4	2	8
	LUMBAR SPINE	4	8	5	10	7	34
LOCAL SOFT TISSUE INJURY Total		21	24	15	19	13	92
Sprain/Strain/Ligament Injury	CERVICAL SPINE	12	10	11	17	13	63
	DORSAL SPINE	1	3		6	1	11
	LUMBAR SPINE	6	9	9	9	7	40
Sprain/Strain/Ligament Injury Total		19	22	20	32	21	114
Tendon/Muscle Injury	CERVICAL SPINE	1	1		1	1	4
	DORSAL SPINE		2				2
	LUMBAR SPINE	2	4			2	8
Tendon/Muscle Injury Total		3	7		1	3	14
Grand Total		43	53	35	52	37	220

From the table above, the closest match that can be made to the ill defined “whiplash” injury are the figures pertaining to cervical spine injuries as follows:-

2003:- 29 cases
2004:- 26 cases

2005:- 21 cases

2006:- 23 cases

2007:- 18 cases