

**Comments on “Achieving the *Revitalising Health and Safety* targets**

**Statistical progress Report, November 2005**

**Health and Safety Executive Statistics Branch”**

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This report is an even-handed assessment of the available evidence of recent trends in work fatalities, major injuries at work, work related ill health and working days lost from injury and ill health. Whilst recognising that the scope of the progress report will be well known to the authors and most readers, some further elucidation in the introduction section would probably be helpful. For example, is the report dealing with England and Wales or the UK? If the report is concerned with the UK, are the component surveys and schemes (RIDDOR, LFS etc) all UK based?

The summary on page 2 was particularly useful and the 'arrow symbols' will help those readers without the time or inclination to get involved in the detail of the assessments, but who do need an overview of the current position.

The summary notes the increase in mesothelioma. Presumably this is based on national death certification, rather than the SWORD scheme results. Perhaps there could be a sentence in the text saying that for certain conditions (eg mesothelioma) it will be more appropriate to rely on national death certificate data rather than specialist surveys.

The SWORD mesothelioma data (Figure 15 of the McNamee report, top and middle panels) are, as it happens, also a good example of how trends for categorical data and linear (or continuous) data can appear inconsistent. Figure 8 of the HSE report offers a further example. I would suggest that the apparent inconsistency between the linear relationship and the 'points' that gave rise to the regression line arises from plotting the baseline of RR=1.0 at the same point. In one sense this is reasonable, but it leaves the reader the impression that both sets of results start from the same position. However in the linear model, the background absolute risk (constant) is also being estimated and is not the absolute risk of the baseline group in the categorical analysis.