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Title: Injury Surveillance in the US Commercial Fishing Industry
Authors: Lucas DL, Lincoln JM

Purpose
The United States has not had a comprehensive surveillance system for fatalities in the commercial fishing. NIOSH has developed the Commercial Fishing Incident Database (CFID) to collect and analyze data on fatalities in the entire US commercial fishing industry since 2000. The purpose of this surveillance system is to identify high risk fisheries in the US and to identify the risk factors that contribute to fatal incidents.
Methodology
Data for CFID are collected from multiple sources, including the US Coast Guard, law enforcement agencies, and state-based occupational fatality surveillance programs. CFID includes information specific to each incident including vessel characteristics, environmental factors, and victim characteristics. Using data from this new surveillance system, a descriptive analysis of fatalities for most areas of the country has been completed.
Results
Each region and fishery of the US examined had different risk factors for fatalities, for which different prevention efforts must be tailored. On the West Coast, there were 66 fatalities during 2000-2007. These fatalities resulted from vessel loss (74%) and falls overboard (19%). The Dungeness crab fishery had the highest number of fatalities, almost all due to vessel sinking and capsizing. In New England, 80 fatalities occurred during 2000-2007. In the lobster fishery, 56% of fatalities were caused by falls overboard. By contrast, in the scallop fishery, only 11% were due to falls overboard.
Conclusions & recommendations
Detailed fatality surveillance can reveal unique risk factors in different fisheries of a country, and identify the worst problems. Interventions should be tailored to various fisheries and should be based on a sound scientific assessment. Other countries may be able to implement surveillance systems similar to CFID to better understand the safety problems in their unique fisheries.