

2. Purpose of the Guidelines

The fundamental purpose of these guidelines is to promote and guide the creation of epidemiological surveillance systems on violence and injuries, using the definition and universally accepted concepts of epidemiological surveillance that have been applied to other types of public health problems to support knowledge, analysis, and decision-making about the control and prevention of these problems. These concepts are discussed in more detail below.

It should be emphasized that **the local level, that is the municipios, is the administrative and political arena in which the ESS and prevention projects should be carried out, and that the two activities—surveillance and prevention—should be planned in a coordinated manner.** It is at the local level that steps should be taken to develop epidemiological surveillance systems that respond to each community's particular situation, making it possible to identify specific types of violence affecting the community's inhabitants and the ways in which this violence is expressed. This does not diminish the importance of the regional or national levels, with which these efforts must of course be linked and coordinated.

Another objective is to promote the formation of networks among those working in epidemiological surveillance systems and injury prevention. There is no doubt that **intersectoral coordination and collaboration of groups with common objectives not only improves the possibilities of success for projects such as these, but is also indispensable in dealing with such eminently social problems.** Networks are a mechanism of coordination and support that make the work more productive.



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