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DDAS: Introduction

HD-AID
Humanitarian DeminingAccident and Incident Database

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DDAS software, a brief introduction

The DDAS software was designed by me in 1998 using the Microsoft Access engine and a Visual Basic front-end. This was revised and became a relational database in 2003. The software can be used to display existing datasets or to record your own. Field names can be edited and replaced with names in another language and the content of drop-down pick-lists is easily customised. Originally distributed on CD, it is not generally given out any more but despite being dated and cludgy, it can still be used many later operating systems.

The main dataset provided is a database of demining accidents. This is a record of accidents that have involved demining personnel while going about their ground-clearance work. The victims have been employed by commercial companies, UN backed initiatives, and NGOs. A few were serving in armed forces when the accident occurred. Access to the victim's name and the name of the organisation they worked with is restricted. When adding your own data, that restriction does not apply.This DDAS dataset is a record of accidents that have occurred during Humanitarian Mine Action work. An "accident" is defined as having occurred when there is an unintended explosive event involving Mine Action workers, or an intended explosive event that results in injury.

The data covers accidents that have occurred in many countries around the world. Records of the accidents were rarely complete and are sometimes augmented by interviews with people involved. In all cases, the written records were an attempt to record the events surrounding the accident soon after it occurred. The content of the most detailed report available is reflected as accurately as possible under the Incident/accident Report button on the first page on each record. Other available documentation is

summarised in files under the Other Documents tab. When available, Medical reports are recorded for each victim involved in the accident under the Victims tab.

It is likely that in some cases people using this database will know more about the accident than is recorded, or know of unrecorded accidents. When this happens, please send an email (to avs(at)nolandmines.com) and share the information. Searching for common features can be combined with entries in any other fields to carry out a compound search and narrow down the data to a "subset" with several common features. Subsets can then be saved as separate datasets. For example, if you wanted to work entirely with the data from accidents that occurred in one country, you would search for all the accidents in that country, then save them as a separate dataset.

Limitations of the demining accident dataset

After the raw data in the DDAS dataset was collected, all identifying references were removed, the data was analysed and common features were highlighted in the field called "Notes". This allows users to make searches on common features that were expressed in various "original" terms amid the summarised and original text. The deliberate use of original terms and phrases in any summarised accident reports is an attempt to allow the user to self-assess the validity of the identification of common features, and so is an aid to qualitative data analysis. To improve this, recent accident reports are added in their original words (edited only for anonymity).

The search function of the database was designed to allow quantitative data analysis in terms of the frequency of types of accident and common features.

As indicative of normal field practise, the DDAS dataset exhibits sample bias because all snapshots of field activity were taken in the period surrounding an accident.

The demining accident database on its own is not a "probability sample", so it is not possible to determine the statistical likelihood of deminers being involved in an accident from it. Attempts to make such an analysis require accurate records of hours worked and devices found in the

ground (as opposed to caches). This information is not often available.

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