

# Spinal Cord Injuries From Falls Worldwide: Regional Incidences and Prevention

The Prevention Committee of the International Spinal Cord Society

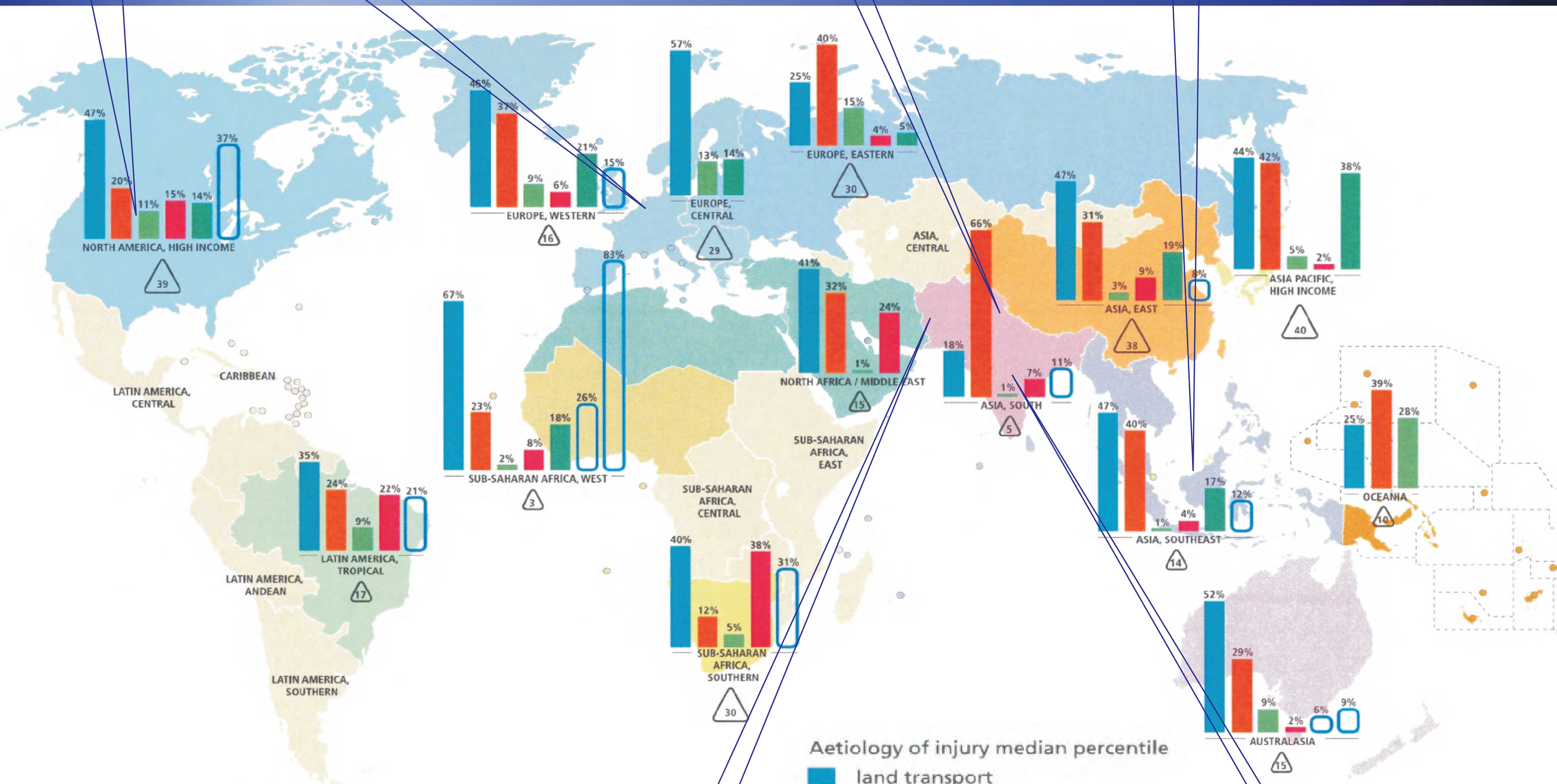
In Western Europe and Japan, who have larger aging populations, the most common falls are ground level in older patients and is the leading cause, in the USA, of SCI over the age 60.



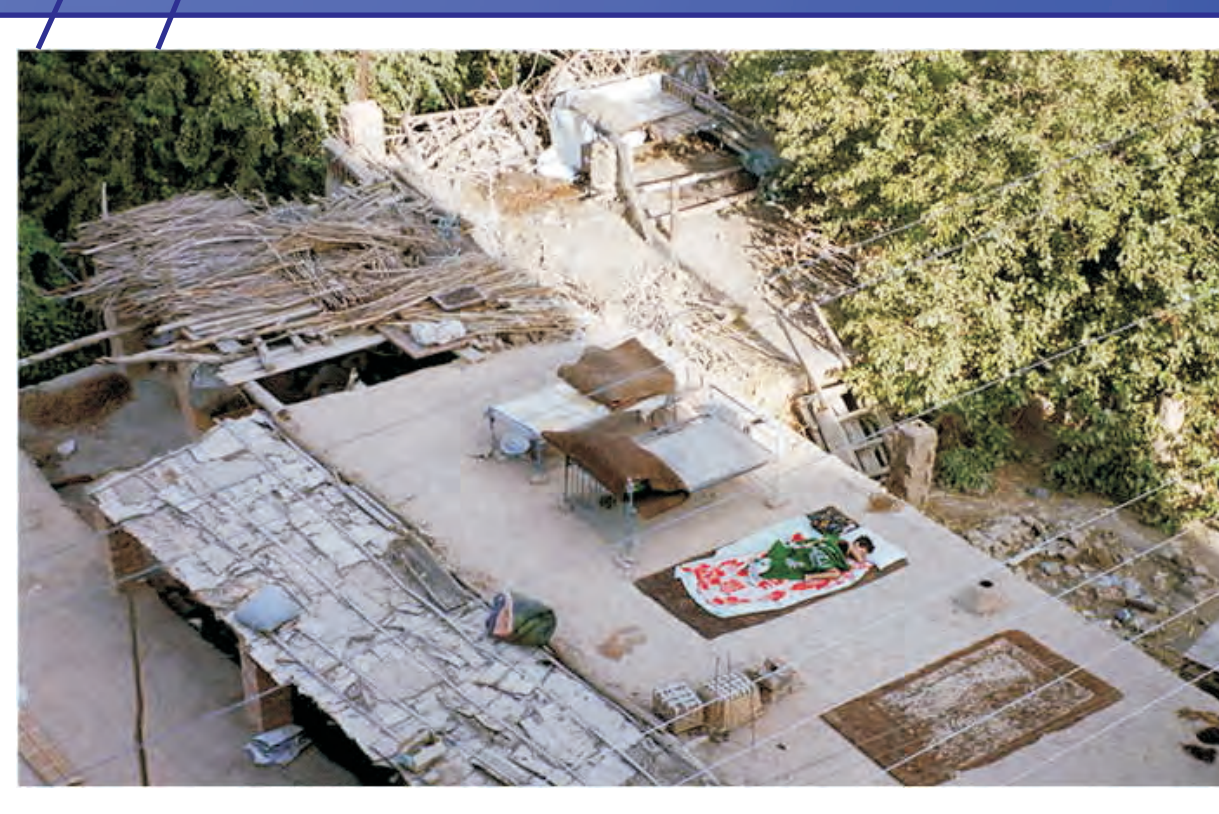
Falls remain the 2nd most common cause worldwide, but in some regions they are even more common than RTAs. In Nepal, 75% of SCIs are from falls from heights, typically farmers cutting leaves to feed livestock.



In Malaysia and Bangladesh, 20% of SCIs result from falls while carrying heavy loads, particularly on the head.



Some areas have no real safety standards, some have ample legislation but no enforcement, and in some regions 10-20% of the workforce is made up of children.



The highest incidence of falls from heights is reported in Pakistan, 82%, including falls from unprotected rooftops and terraces.



In India, there are many falls from electric power poles as farmers try to borrow electricity from power lines

**References:**

Cripps, R.A., Lee, B.B., Wing, P., Weerts, E., Mackay, J. & Brown, D. (2011). A global map for traumatic spinal cord injury epidemiology: towards a living data repository for injury prevention. *Spinal Cord*, 49(4), 493-501.

Asian Spinal Cord Network. (2008). *Guidelines for prevention of spinal cord injuries*. Dhalko, Kathmaudu: New Sandesh Printers.

**Conclusion:**

1. Different regions, different causes of falls
2. Since mechanisms of falls vary so greatly from region to region, prevention programs must be directed to local issues

**"Since there is no current cure for SCI, the best approach is prevention."**  
ISCoS Prevention Committee

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