The development of a coding system for causes of mental ill health reported to the SOSMI surveillance programme and an estimation of the validity and reliability of that coding system

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ABSTRACT

A coding scheme for the precipitating causes of mental ill health reported to occupational surveillance schemes was developed. The reliability of the scheme was tested by three observers using data reported to the Surveillance of Occupational Stress and Mental Illness (SOSMI) and the Occupational Physicians Reporting Activity (OPRA) Occupational Surveillance schemes over a two-year period. The Kappa statistic was calculated and showed a good degree of agreement amongst the observers. The second part of the study looked at the validity of the coding scheme. It highlighted difficulties mainly relating to the fact that in a large proportion of cases the precipitating causes were classified into the less specific categories.