

FATAL INJURIES IN GAUTENG IN 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Injury is one of the major causes of death in South Africa. However, despite the magnitude and constant media coverage of injury death, the situation remains a cause for concern. Knowledge of causes of death are vital for monitoring demographic, seasonal and socio-economically related trends in causes of death and disability. Even more importantly, understanding risk to injury death is a requirement for developing prevention programmes.

The Safety and Peace Promotion Research Unit of the Medical Research Council and University of South Africa (MRC-UNISA SAPPRU) manages on behalf of South Africans the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS). Three of the main aims of the NIMSS are;

- to provide comprehensive information about deaths due to external causes;
- make it possible for the state and its partners to establish a permanent comprehensive automated system that will timeously register all injury deaths that occur in all provinces; and
- inform initiatives for the prevention of non-natural fatalities.

OVERALL RESULTS

MANNER OF DEATH. Violence/homicide was the leading manner of death, accounting for just under one-third (32.4%, n= 3671) of the 11329 non-natural deaths recorded in Gauteng, followed by transport (28.7%, n=3248), suicide (11.3%, n=1 278), and other unintentional injury unintentional injuries (8.3%, n=937). For the remaining 2195 (19.4%) cases, the manner of death was undetermined. (Fig. 1).

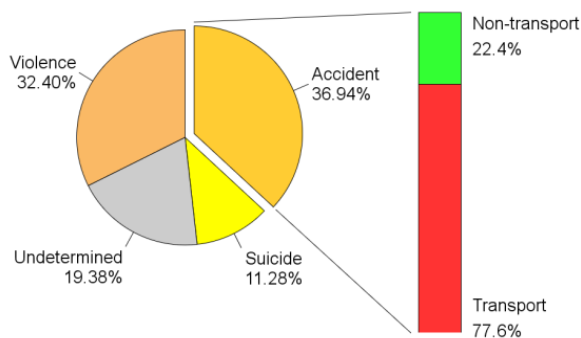


Figure 1. Overall manner of death (N = 4520)

EXTERNAL CAUSES OF DEATH. The leading external cause of death was firearm-related (15.5%, n=1630) followed by pedestrian injury (12.7%, n=1334), sharp objects (10.4%, n=1091), and blunt force (10.1%, n=1064). For children aged 0-4 years, abortions were the leading causes of death, while for older children (5-14 years) it was pedestrian injuries. Among the youth aged 15-29 years, adults aged 30-44 years and older adults aged 45-59 years, firearms was the leading causes of death. For adults 60 years and older, pedestrian injuries were the leading external cause of death.

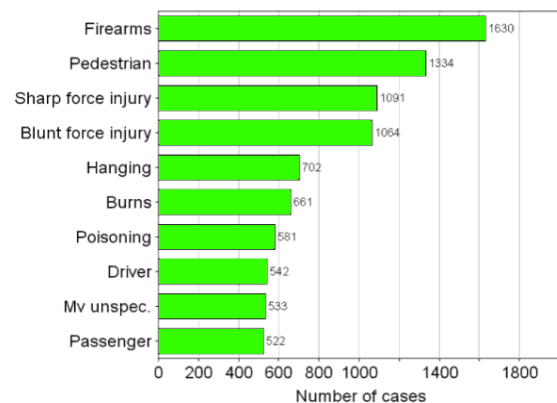


Figure 2. Top 10 external causes of death (n = 8660)

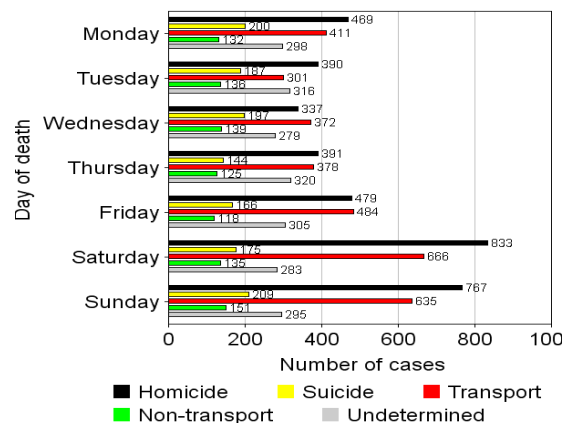


Figure 3. Day of death (n = 11223)

CONCLUSION

Violence/homicide (largely due to firearms) was the leading manner of death among males while among females it was transport (in particular due to pedestrian-related injuries).

Disproportionate number of deaths occurred over weekends for both violence/homicide and transport deaths (Fig. 3.)

The leading manner of death among children aged 5-14 years and adults 45 year and older were transport-related and in particular, pedestrian injury. Violence was the leading manner of death among youth aged 15-29 years and adults aged 30-44 years. Of note is that 60% of deaths among 0-4 year olds were classified as undetermined.

Abortion-was the leading external cause of death among 0-4 years while pedestrian injury was the leading external cause of death among children aged 5-14 years and for the 60+ age groups. Violence was the leading cause of death for the remaining age groups. In general, the majority of the injury deaths occurred among males in the economically active age range of 15-44 years. While the single leading scene of injury was the road, the leading scene of injury for violence, suicides and unintentional deaths was in and around the home (Fig . 4).

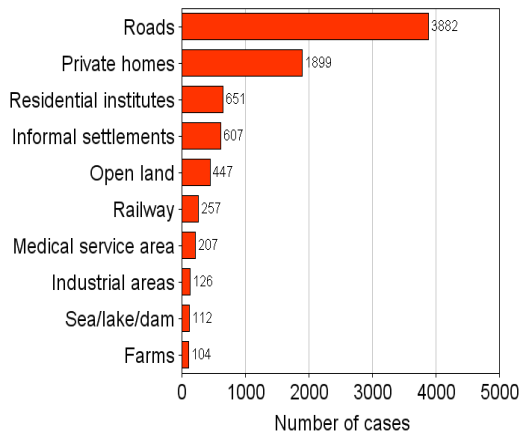


Figure 4. Top 10 scenes of injury (n = 8292)

About half the violence and transport-related cases tested positive for alcohol. Levels of consumption among pedestrians were particularly high at more than four times the legal limit for driving of 0.05g/100ml, used as a proxy level for intoxication

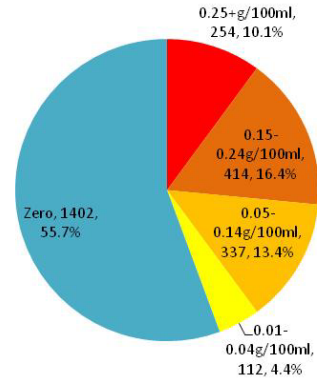


Figure 5. Blood Alcohol Levels (n = 2519)

SOURCE

Donson, H.(Ed) (2009). *A profile of fatal injuries in Gautengin 2009: The 3rd Gauteng Provincial Annual Report of the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System.. Cape Town: MRC-UNISA SAPPRU.*

CONTACT DETAILS

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