

INTRODUCTION

Injuries are a significant public health problem in Georgia. Injury is defined as unintentional or intentional damage to the body resulting from acute exposure to thermal, mechanical, electrical, or chemical energy or from the absence of such essentials as heat or oxygen. Each year approximately 4,750 Georgians die from injury, and the death rate for Georgians is higher than the US rate for most causes of injury. Injury deaths are only part of the injury burden in Georgia. For every injury death, there are about eight inpatient hospitalizations in Georgia, an estimated 35 outpatient visits,¹ about 270 emergency department visits,² and approximately 600 injury visits to physicians' offices.³ Those who survive suffer either temporary or permanent pain, possible lifelong disability, and different degrees of economic consequences as a result of injuries.

Most injuries can be prevented through the use of existing technology and environmental changes. The public health approach to injury prevention is to define the problem, identify risk and protective factors, develop and test prevention strategies, and assure widespread adoption of proven injury prevention principles and strategies. Injury data are crucial for the proper development of injury prevention programs. Identifying populations at risk for specific injuries assists in the support and development of appropriate prevention programs. The purpose of the *Profile of Injuries in Georgia 2005* is to describe the burden of injuries in Georgia and identify risk and protective factors.

The *Profile of Injuries in Georgia 2005* presents updated information for the years 1999 through 2001 on fatal and non-fatal injuries in Georgia using death certificate and hospital discharge data. Both unintentional and intentional injuries are included. Unintentional injuries include drowning, falls, fire, motor vehicle traffic-related incidents/crashes, and poisoning. Suicide and homicide fall under the category of intentional injury. The seven causes of injury listed in this profile accounted for about 81% of all injury deaths and 76% of all injury hospitalizations from 1999 to 2001. In each section of this report, a specific cause of injury is addressed and a definition of the mechanism of injury is included; comparisons are made to identify at-risk groups according to age, race and sex. Each section also includes prevention strategies, current Georgia Division of Public Health programs, and relevant web based resources.