GEORGIA

Special Emphasis Report: Traumatic Brain Injury 2015

Understanding TBI

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a serious public health problem in Georgia and in the United States. A TBI is caused by a bump, blow, jolt, or penetration to the head that disrupts the normal function of the brain. Each year, traumatic brain injuries contribute to a substantial number of deaths and cases of permanent disability.

Impact and Magnitude of TBI

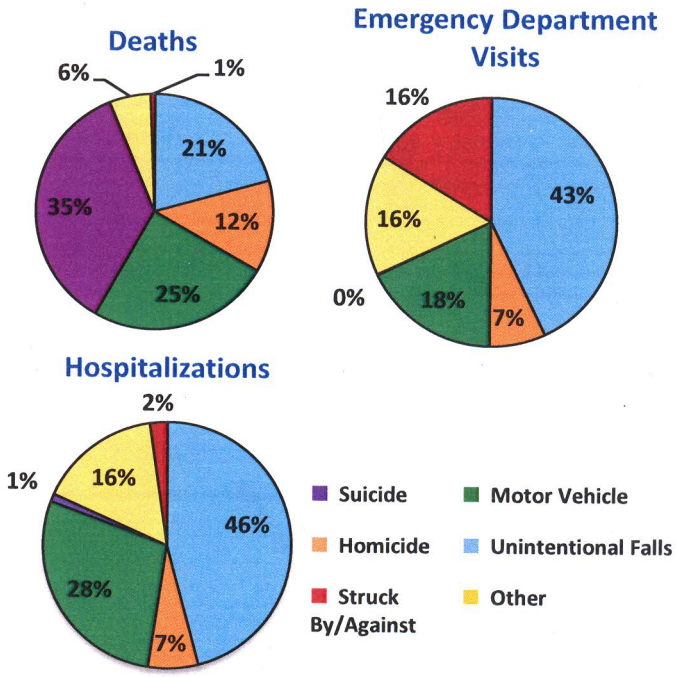
During 2015, a TBI was sustained by at least 57,424 people in Georgia. Among those injured, 1,818 (*18.0 per 100,000*) died where TBI was reported as a cause of death on the death certificate alone or in combination with other injuries or conditions, another 5,042 (*50.6 per 100,000*), were hospitalized with a TBI alone or in combination with other injuries or conditions, and an additional 50,564 (*508.1 per 100,000*) were treated and released from emergency departments with a TBI alone or in combination with other injuries or conditions. The hospitalization and emergency room data only reflect the first three quarters of 2015 using ICD-9 codes and the death data includes all of 2015. An unknown number of individuals sustained injuries that were treated in other settings or went untreated.

Causes of TBI

Cause of injury varies across the three levels of severity. Suicide was the leading cause of injury among those who died where TBI was reported as a cause of death on the death certificate alone or in combination with other injuries or conditions. Unintentional Falls was the leading cause of injury among those who were hospitalized with a TBI alone or in combination with other injuries or conditions. And, Unintentional Falls was the leading cause of injury among those who were treated and released from emergency departments with a TBI alone or in combination with other injuries or conditions.

Notes: *Firearm-related injuries were reported but excluded from the etiology graphic due to overlap with multiple categories (e.g., homicide/assault, suicide). Firearms were related with 46%> of deaths, 2% of hospitalizations, and <1% of emergency department visits. Completeness of external-cause coding for TBI-related cases can impact the accuracy of the cause classifications for hospitalizations and emergency department visits.*

Figure 1: Percentage of Annual TBI-Related Deaths, Hospitalizations, and Emergency Department Visits, by External Cause, in Georgia, 2015



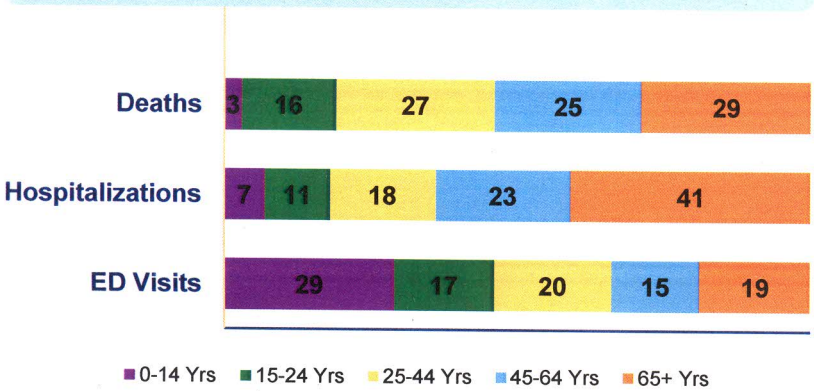
TBI by Age

The highest number of TBI-related deaths* were among persons ages 15-24. Among those with TBI-related hospitalizations,** persons ages 75-84 were most affected. Persons ages 15-24 made the most TBI-related emergency department visits.**

**TBI was reported as a cause of death on the death certificate alone or in combination with other injuries or conditions*

*** TBI alone or in combination with other injuries or conditions*

Figure 2: Percentage of Annual TBI-Related Deaths,* Hospitalizations, and Emergency Department Visits,**by Age, in Georgia, 2015**



Georgia Department of Public Health

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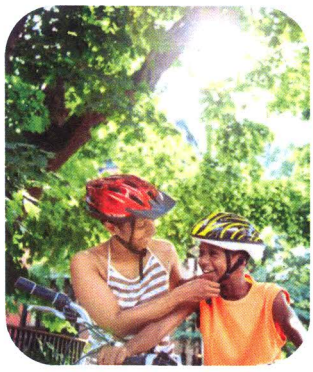
TBI by Gender



Men were more likely to sustain a traumatic brain injury than women. The magnitude of this difference was greatest among those who died. Men accounted for 73% (*27.9 per 100,000*) of deaths where TBI was reported as a cause of death on the death certificate alone or in combination with other injuries or conditions, 60% (*65.3 per 100,000),* of hospitalizations for TBI alone or in combination with other injuries or conditions and 49% (*517.0 per 100,000*) of emergency department visits for TBI alone or in combination with other injuries or conditions.

TBI Prevention Strategies

CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (Injury Center) is committed to protecting people against preventable TBI by putting science into action.

- **State Injury Prevention Programs** - The Injury Center's Core Violence and Injury Prevention Program (Core VIPP) funds state health departments to estimate the impact of TBIs and define the groups most affected. www.cdc.gov/injury
- ***Heads Up*** – Injury Center campaigns with free tools for health care providers, school administrators, nurses, teachers, coaches, and parents to help them recognize and respond to a TBI. www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury
- **Motor Vehicle Safety** – Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death, injury and TBI in the US. CDC's primary prevention focuses on child passenger safety, seat belt use and reducing impaired driving.

Georgia TBI Activities

Prevention: Our TBI prevention efforts include sports safety technique trainings for athletes, concussion education, older driver safety initiatives, child passenger safety education and car seat distributions, train-the-trainer workshops for traffic engineers and highway designers, falls prevention events to raise awareness about fall risk and protective factors, and other state-, local-, and community-wide education and outreach initiatives.

Surveillance: We conduct TBI surveillance through death, emergency department, hospitalization, the Georgia Violent Death Reporting System (GVDRS), and the Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (CODES) linkage data and have data partnerships with EMS and trauma.

Partnerships: We work closely with our partners to reduce injuries to Georgia's citizens. Our partners include but are not limited to the Concussion Institute at Gwinnett Medical Center, the Injury Prevention Research Center at Emory, Emory School of Medicine, Emory Hospital, Grady Hospital, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Shepherd Center, Georgia Trauma Commission, the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission, the Division of Aging Services, Safe Kids, the Georgia Athletic Trainers Association and other national, state and local organizations.

Accomplishments: The Georgia Return to Play Act of 2013 became effective on January 1, 2014. The legislation seeks to educate the public on the risks of concussions and mandates all public and private schools to adopt a concussion management and return to play policy for youth athletes who are concussed during a game.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

https://dph.georgia.gov/injury-prevention-program

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