



Fact Sheet on

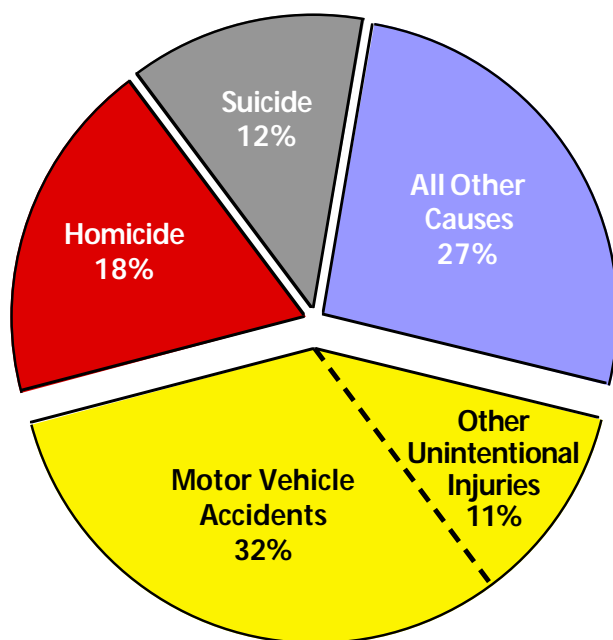
# Unintentional Injury:

## Adolescents & Young Adults

### Highlights:

- ▶ Unintentional injury is the leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults.
- ▶ The mortality rate for unintentional injury peaks in late adolescence/early adulthood.
- ▶ Male adolescents engage in behaviors which put them at risk for injury more often than females.
- ▶ White adolescents are more likely than Blacks or Hispanics to die from unintentional injuries.
- ▶ 99% of motor vehicle-related injuries to adolescents and young adults are non-fatal.
- ▶ There has been a steady decrease in unintentional injury mortality among adolescents.

- ▶ Unintentional injury\* is the leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults.



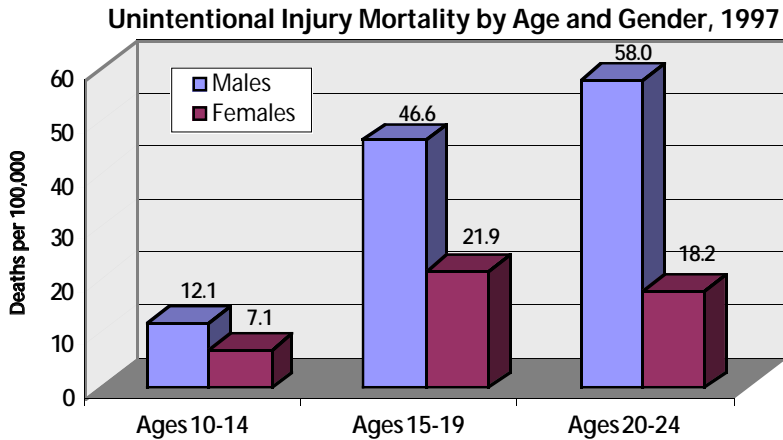
Leading Causes of Mortality:  
Adolescents/Young Adults Ages 10-24, 1997

In 1997, 43% of all deaths among adolescents and young adults ages 10-24 resulted from unintentional injury. Of the 35,960 deaths in this age group, 15,204 were attributed to such causes for a death rate of 27.3 per 100,000. Of these deaths, three-quarters (11,677) were caused by motor vehicle accidents (21.2 per 100,000). Drowning (2.4% of all deaths), poisoning (2.1% of all deaths), and fire and falls (each 0.8% of all deaths) accounted for much lower percentages. (CDC Wonder, 2000).

### \*Unintentional Injuries:

*This fact sheet focuses on unintentional injuries as distinct from those defined as intentional, whether self or externally inflicted. Information about intentional injury is available in the Violence and the Suicide Fact Sheets.*

- ▶ The mortality rate for unintentional injury peaks in late adolescence/early adulthood.

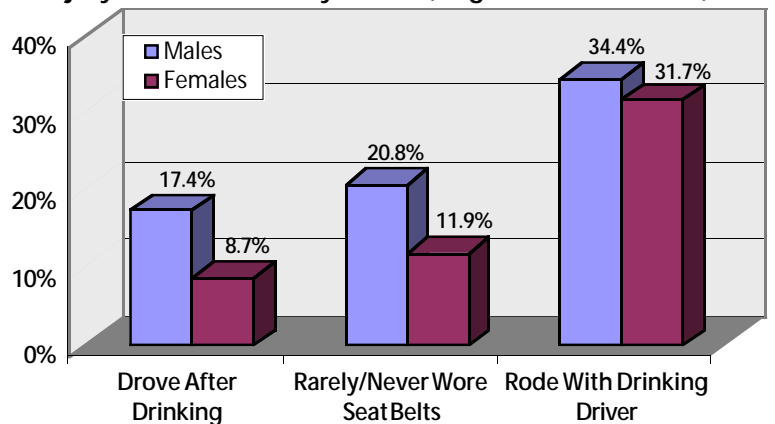


While mortality rates for most causes of death increase throughout the lifespan, injury-related deaths peak during late adolescence/early adulthood. Adolescent males have a consistently higher rate of death due to injury, averaging almost three times the rate of adolescent females (40.5 vs. 15.5 deaths/100,000, ages 10-24). A major difference between male and female patterns is that the male injury death rate increases through early adulthood, while it declines for females (CDC Wonder, 2000).

- ▶ Male adolescents engage in behaviors which put them at risk for injury more often than females.

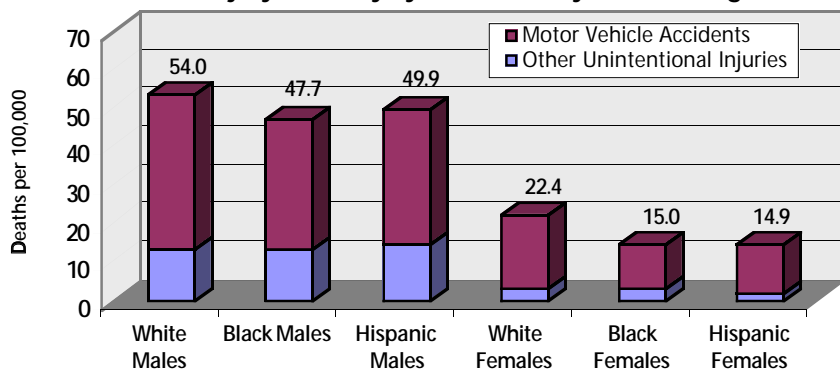
Among high school students, males were more likely than females to report engaging in behaviors which put them at risk for injury. These behaviors also varied by race/ethnicity: Blacks (22.5%) were more likely than Whites (15.5%) or Hispanics (14.4%) to have rarely or never worn seat belts; Hispanics (39.5%) were more likely than Blacks (34.4%) or Whites (32.4%) to have ridden with a drinking driver; and Whites (14.6%) were more likely than Hispanics (12.7%) or Blacks (7.9%) to have driven after drinking alcohol (YRBSS, 2000).

**Injury Risk-Behaviors by Gender, High School Students, 1999**



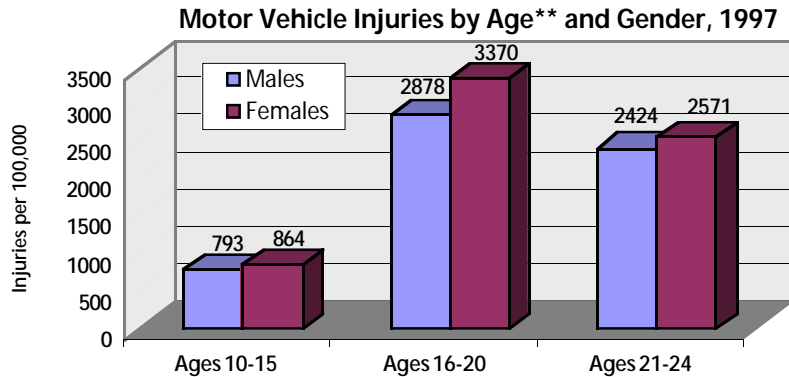
- ▶ White adolescents are more likely than Blacks or Hispanics to die from unintentional injuries.

**Unintentional Injury Mortality by Race/Ethnicity & Gender, Ages 15-24, 1997**



Both White male and White female adolescents are more likely to die from unintentional injuries than their Black and Hispanic counterparts. This difference is mostly due to the disparity in motor vehicle deaths (NCHS, 1999).

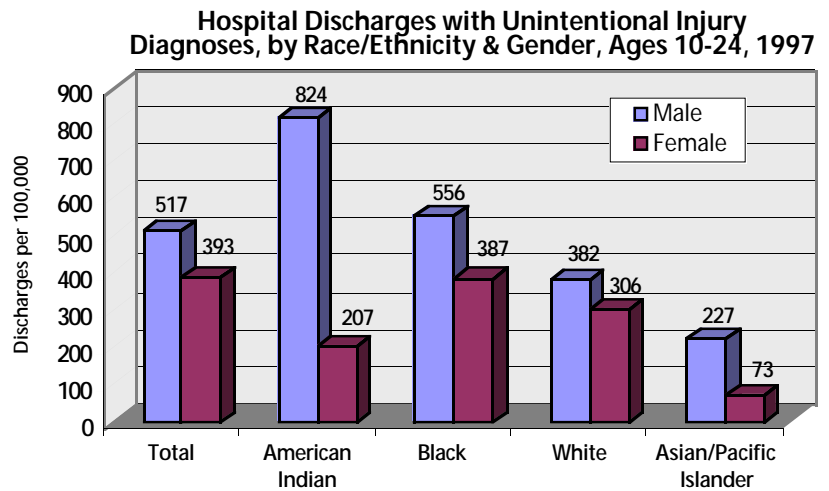
- ▶ 99% of motor vehicle-related injuries to adolescents and young adults are non-fatal.



Injury mortality is a small part of the total cost of injury. In 1997, only 1% of the 1.12 million motor vehicle-related injuries among 10-24 year olds resulted in death. Although males have a higher death rate, females have a higher injury rate. In addition, adolescents ages 16-20 have the highest rates of both motor vehicle-related injury and mortality of any age group (NHTSA, 1998).

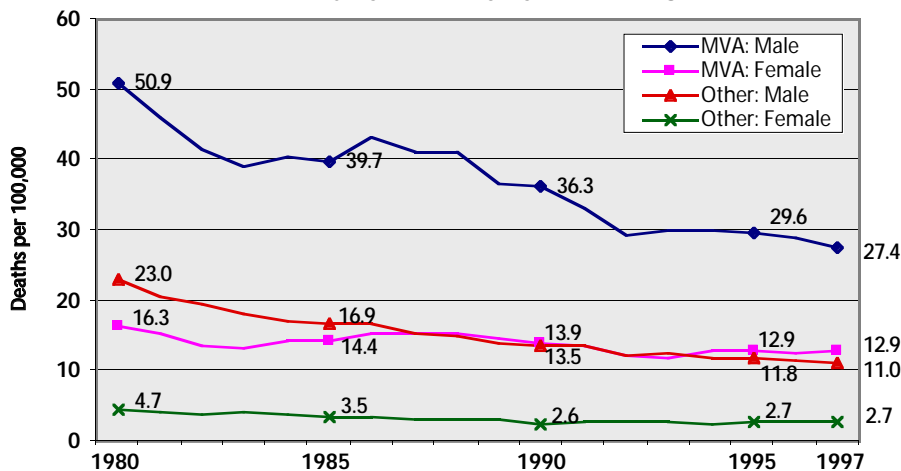
- ▶ Unintentional injury is the second leading cause of hospitalization for 10-24 year-old males.\*\*\*

In 1997, unintentional injury accounted for 8% of all hospital discharges among adolescents and young adults ages 10-24. There is great gender disparity, with unintentional injury accounting for 19.0% of hospital discharges among males, and only 4.5% among females. This is largely due to pregnancy, which accounts for over half of all female hospitalizations for this age range. As with motor vehicle accidents, less than 1% of all hospitalizations for unintentional injuries to 10-24 year olds resulted in death (NHDS, 1999).



- ▶ There has been a steady decrease in unintentional injury mortality among adolescents.

**Trends in Unintentional Injury Mortality by Gender, Ages 10-24, 1980-97**



Overall, injury-related mortality among adolescents and young adults has fallen by 43% since 1980 (from 47.7 per 100,000) and by 18% since 1990 (from 33.5 per 100,000) to 27.3 deaths per 100,000 in 1997. This trend was seen among both males and females, although males experienced the greatest reduction in mortality rates with a 48% decline since 1980 vs. 25% for females, and a 23% decline since 1990 vs. 5% for females (CDC Wonder, 2000).

## Data Sources:

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (1999). United States Injury Mortality Statistics. [online database: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc>]

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. (2000). CDC Wonder, Mortality (compressed) data set. [online database: <http://wonder.cdc.gov>]

Kann, L., Kinchen, S.A., Williams, B.I., Ross, J.G., Lowry, R., Hill, C.V., Grunbaum, J., Blumson, P.S., Collins, J.L., Kolbe, L.J. (1998). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, 1997. Surveillance and Evaluation Research Branch, Division of Adolescent and School Health. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

National Center for Health Statistics. (1997). Report of Final Mortality Statistics, 1997. (DHHS Publication No. PHS 97-1220) Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Center for Health Statistics. (1999). 1997 National Ambulatory Medical Care Discharge Survey. (Private data run). Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Center for Health Statistics. (1999). 1997 National Hospital Discharge Survey. (Private data run). Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (1998). Traffic Safety Facts 1997. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.

\*\* Age groups used were those provided by NHTSA.

\*\*\* Hospital discharge rates are derived from a nationally representative sample and calculated using U.S. Census Bureau population figures. 22.4% of discharge forms listed Other or Not Stated for the Race/Ethnicity category. The resulting rates may not be reliable.

In all cases, the most recent available data were used. Some data are released 1-3 years after collection. For questions regarding data sources or availability, please contact NAHIC. For racial/ethnic data, the category names presented are those of the data sources used.

## 2000 NAHIC Adolescent Fact Sheets

Fact Sheet on Demographics: Children and Adolescents

Fact Sheet on Mortality: Adolescents and Young Adults

Fact Sheet on Adolescent Violence

Fact Sheet on Suicide: Adolescents and Young Adults

Fact Sheet on Injury: Adolescents and Young Adults

Fact Sheet on Preventive Health Services for Adolescents

Fact Sheet on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention

Fact Sheet on Adolescent Substance Use

Fact Sheet on Adolescent Sexuality

Fact Sheet on Adolescent Health Care Utilization

Fact Sheet on Mental Health

## National Adolescent Health Information Center

Division of Adolescent Medicine,  
Department of Pediatrics &  
Institute for Health Policy Studies,  
School of Medicine,  
University of California,  
San Francisco

UCSF Box 0503  
San Francisco, CA 94143-0503  
ph. 415.502.4856, f. 415.502.4858  
email: [nahic@itsa.ucsf.edu](mailto:nahic@itsa.ucsf.edu)  
<http://youth.ucsf.edu/nahic>

### Background on NAHIC

The National Adolescent Health Information Center (NAHIC) was established with funding from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau in 1993 (4H06 MC00002) to serve as a national resource for adolescent health research and information to assure the integration, synthesis, coordination and dissemination of adolescent health-related information.

### NAHIC Faculty and Staff

Charles E. Irwin, Jr., MD  
Claire D. Brindis, DrPH  
Susan G. Millstein, PhD  
Elizabeth M. Ozer, PhD  
David Knopf, LCSW, MPH  
M. Jane Park, MPH  
Scott Burg  
Pamela S. Witt

Copies of any of the listed Adolescent Fact Sheets can be downloaded from the World Wide Web at <http://youth.ucsf.edu/nahic>. Hard copies can be requested at (415) 502-4856, or by email at: [nahic@itsa.ucsf.edu](mailto:nahic@itsa.ucsf.edu).



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