

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Too Many Tragedies: National Pediatric All-Terrain Vehicle Fatalities

G.M. DENNING¹, K.K. HARLAND, C.A. JENNISSEN

¹University of Iowa, Carver College of Medicine, Department of Emergency Medicine, Iowa City, Iowa, USA.

E-mail: gerene-denning@uiowa.edu

Purpose/Objective:

Children and teens have long been known to be at higher risk for all-terrain vehicle (ATV)-related deaths and injuries relative to adults, especially those in rural areas and living on farms. However, the epidemiology of pediatric ATV-related fatalities has not previously been reported. The study objective was to determine the risk factors and outcomes for ATV-related deaths among victims less than 18 years of age.

Methods/Efforts:

Descriptive and comparative analyses were performed using the Consumer Product Safety Commission's national ATV Fatality Database (1985-2009).

Results/Findings:

32% of all ATV-related fatalities occurred in youth under 18 years of age. Among pediatric victims, 60% of deaths were from roadway crashes, 46% involved multiple riders, and >90% occurred on adult size ATVs. The use of adult size vehicles may account for the high proportion (44%) of pediatric victims who suffered crush-related injuries. Among 16 and 17 year olds, almost 20% of crashes involved alcohol. Relative to adults, pediatric crashes were more likely to involve a collision and, despite greater helmet use, to result in a head injury.

Application to Field Research:

The human cost of ATV-related deaths is high, including among our youth. Many pediatric fatalities involve unsafe ATV operating behaviors including riding with passengers, traveling on roadways, riding adult-size vehicles, and not wearing helmets. More resources are vitally needed to support injury prevention efforts designed to reduce pediatric ATV-related deaths and injuries.

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