Injury and Violence in Wisconsin

Injury is the leading cause of death and disability among Wisconsin residents annually. According to America’s Health Rankings, Wisconsin ranked 27th for rates of suicide and 19th for violent crime in 2015.

Unintentional injuries are often referred to as accidents despite being highly preventable. Intentional injuries are those that were purposely inflicted, and often involve a violent act. Injuries are the leading cause of death among Wisconsin people aged 1-44 years and are a significant cause of morbidity and mortality at all ages. Injuries and violence occur in all ages, races, and socioeconomic classes. However, some groups are more affected.

**Falls**

Unintentional falls account for a significant number of injury-related deaths and hospitalizations each year. In 2010, unintentional falls accounted for the greatest number of Wisconsin injury deaths. Falls resulted in the greatest number of injury deaths among adults, primarily among adults 65 and older. White adults had a significantly higher age-adjusted death rate from falls than did Black, Hispanic, and Asian adults. During 2008-2010, injury deaths due to falls occurred among residents from all 72 counties of Wisconsin. Counties with age-adjusted rates that exceeded the statewide rate of fall-related injury death were found in urban, suburban, and rural regions. In 2010, unintentional falls accounted for the greatest number of Wisconsin injury hospitalizations, nearly 50% of all injury hospitalizations. In 2010, Medicare was listed as the primary payer for nearly 75% of fall-related hospitalizations in Wisconsin.

**Motor Vehicle Crashes**

In 2013, there were 491 fatal crashes, 28,747 injury crashes, and 118,254 traffic crashes in Wisconsin, resulting in 527 deaths. Wisconsin fares slightly better than its Midwestern neighbors in fatality rates, at 0.89 deaths per 100 million miles of vehicle travel. Minnesota has the lowest rate regionally, 0.68, while Iowa, Indiana, and Michigan have rates at or above 1.0.

Compared to other age groups, teens have the lowest rates of seat belt use and a greater risk of being involved in a motor vehicle crash at all levels of blood alcohol concentration (BAC). In Wisconsin, approximately one-quarter of adults do not always wear a seat belt when driving or riding in a motor vehicle. Males were significantly more likely to not wear a seat belt than were females. Motor vehicle crash fatality rates were highest among rural populations; however, deaths occurred among residents of all counties but one.
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Sexual Assault and Violence
Sexual Violence is a verbal and/or physical act that breaks a person's trust and safety and is sexual in nature. Behaviors range from sexual harassment to unwanted fondling to forced penetration. All are done without consent. Sexual violence affects women at a significantly higher rate than men; four-fifths of victims are female. It is estimated that one in seven or 14% of Wisconsin women over the age of 18 has been raped at some point in her lifetime. Approximately 90% of victims know the person who assaults them. Two-thirds of victims of reports assaults are less than 15 years of age.

Suicide
The suicide rate in Wisconsin is four times the homicide rate. Annually, over 700 Wisconsin residents die by suicide. In addition, approximately 5,500 Wisconsin residents are hospitalized due to intentional, self-inflicted injury. More on suicide in Wisconsin can be found in the Mental Health section.

Violence
Wisconsin ranked 19th for violent crime in America’s Health Rankings 2015. The number of violence crime (murders, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults) per 100,000 population has remained relatively stable in Wisconsin for the past three years at approximately 280. The national average for violent crime for the same period was 387 offenses per 100,000.

What's Being Done

- Wisconsin Falls Prevention Initiative and Wisconsin Fall Prevention Action Plan
- Forward Wisconsin: A Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Violence
- Prevent Suicide Wisconsin

What Can Be Done

- Increase access to information on evidence based injury prevention programs and policies at the state, regional and local levels
- Increase the capacity of professionals in WI to design, implement and evaluate evidence based injury and violence prevention programs and policies
- Develop an injury and violence prevention policy agenda

Injury and Violence

1 Wisconsin Department of Health Services, *Healthiest Wisconsin 2020*, Injury and Violence Focus Area Profile.
3 Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). The Burden of Injury in Wisconsin. [http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/P0/P00283.pdf](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/P0/P00283.pdf)
4 Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH), Wisconsin resident death certificates.
5 Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH), Injury Hospitalizations Module, hospital inpatient discharge database
6 Wisconsin Department of Transportation. 2013 Wisconsin Traffic Crash Facts.
8 Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS); 2009-2011 combined landline-cell dataset.
9 Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Fatalities by County. April 2016.