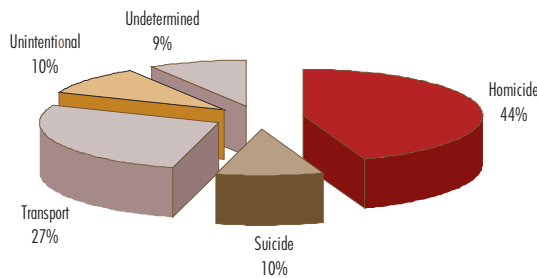


CHAPTER 3. MANNER OF NON-NATURAL DEATH

Compiled by Megan Prinsloo

Homicide accounted for nearly half of all non-natural deaths. This was followed by transport-related deaths (27%), while suicide and unintentional injury accounted for nearly 10% of deaths each and undetermined cases for about 9%. Figure 1 shows the manner of death for the full sample of non-natural deaths for 2001.

Figure 1. Manner of non-natural death, 2001 (N= 25361)



3.1 MANNER OF NON-NATURAL DEATH BY SEX

For 2001 males accounted for 80.5% of non-natural deaths, with about four males for every female victim. Among males nearly half the non-natural deaths were as a result of homicide, followed by about one-quarter being transport-related deaths. Among females about one-third of their deaths were transport-related, and another third were due to homicide. Suicide accounted for a similar percentage of about one-tenth of non-natural deaths among both males and females. Unintentional injury deaths accounted for a higher percentage among females.

The above figures should be viewed with caution since females had about twice the percentage of undetermined deaths compared to males, which may suggest that this category includes a larger percentage of inappropriately classified cases. Table II shows the manner of non-natural death by sex in 2001 for 25 040 (98.7%) of all reported non-natural deaths.

Table II. Manner of non-natural death by sex, 2001 (N = 25 040).

	Male	Female	M:F ratio
Homicide	9700 (48.1)	1463 (29.9)	6.6 : 1
Transport	5221 (25.9)	1575 (32.2)	3.3 : 1
Unintentional	1758 (8.7)	702 (14.3)	2.5 : 1
Suicide	2045 (10.2)	437 (8.9)	4.7 : 1
Undetermined	1422 (7.1)	717 (14.7)	2 : 1
TOTAL	20146	4894	4.1 : 1

3.2 MANNER OF NON-NATURAL DEATH BY POPULATION GROUP

The trend for deaths among Africans and Coloureds was very similar - about half of these non-natural deaths were the result of homicide followed by about one-quarter transport-related deaths. Nearly one-tenth were the result of unintentional injuries and below one-tenth were suicides. Among Whites and Asians transport-related injuries were the major cause of non-natural death, accounting for about a third and more than a third of cases respectively. These were followed by relatively lower percentages of homicides but higher percentages of suicides compared to the African and Coloured cases. As a result of Asians having the highest percentage of transport-related deaths (39.3%), unintentional injury-related deaths accounted for the lowest percentage (7.8%), while homicide accounted for just over one-quarter of cases. Whites had the highest percentage of unintentional injury-related deaths (10.9%) and the lowest percentage of homicides (18.3%). Suicides were more frequent among Whites than homicides. The percentage of suicides among Asians was also relatively high, accounting for more than twice the percentage of suicide among Africans and Coloureds. Table III shows the manner of non-natural death by population group for 25 024 (98.7%) of all non-natural deaths.

Table III. Manner of non-natural death by population group, 2001 (N = 25 024).

	Asian	African	Coloured	White
Homicide	194 (26.5)	8910 (48.4)	1551 (50.5)	514 (18.3)
Transport	288 (39.3)	4849 (26.3)	748 (24.4)	919 (32.7)
Unintentional	57 (7.8)	1794 (9.7)	296 (9.6)	309 (10.9)
Suicide	132 (18.0)	1391 (7.6)	209 (6.8)	749 (26.7)
Undetermined	61 (8.3)	1468 (7.9)	266 (8.7)	319 (11.4)
TOTAL	732	18412	3070	2810

3.3 Manner of death by age

Age was known or recorded for 21 691 (85.5%) of the 25 361 non-natural deaths. The average age was 32.8 (std dev. 15.4). Figure 2a shows that from 15 years of age homicides rose sharply, with a distinct peak in the 25-29-year age group. The highest percentage of homicides (54.8%) and suicides (46.5%) (Figure 2b) was found among young adults aged 20-34 years. A decrease in the percentage of suicides was noted from 35 to 64 years. Figures 2c and 2d show that the highest percentage of deaths as a result of transport injuries (40%) and unintentional injuries (31.4%) occurred among those aged 25-39 years. More than a quarter (27.8%) of unintentional injury deaths (Figure 2d) occurred among those younger than 20 years, with a peak among the 1-4 year age group, which accounted for 11.3% of cases. Increases in both transport-related and unintentional injury deaths were noted among those of 65 years and older.

Figure 2a. Homicide by age, 2001 (N = 9736).

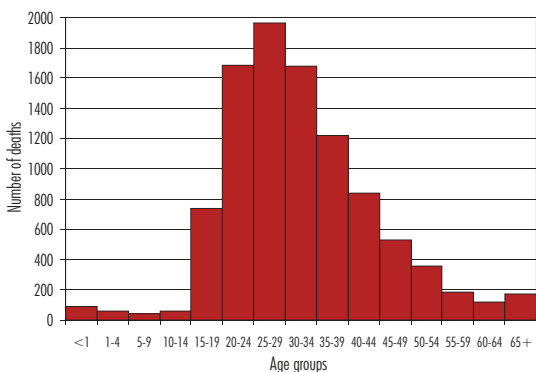


Figure 2b. Suicide by age, 2001 (N = 2213).

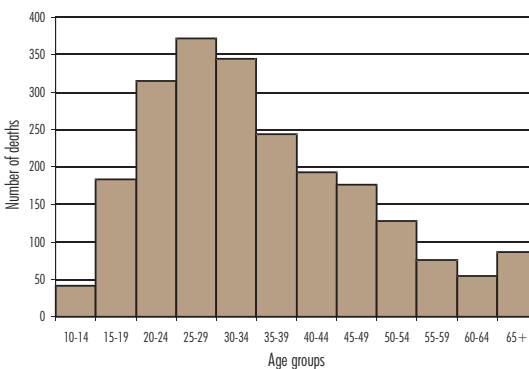


Figure 2c. Transport deaths by age, 2001 (N = 5807).

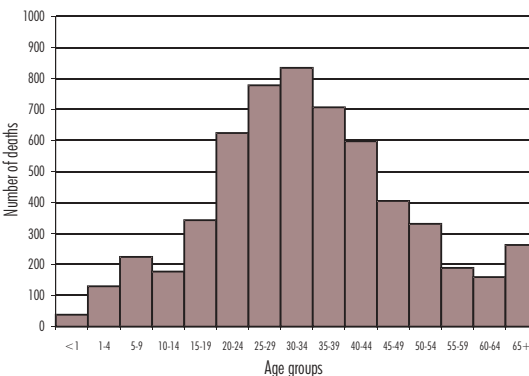


Figure 2d. Unintentional Injury death by age, 2001 (N = 2168).

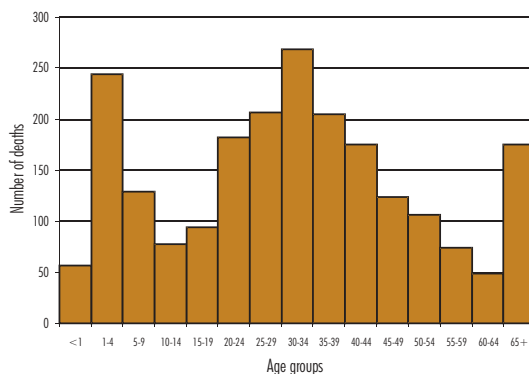
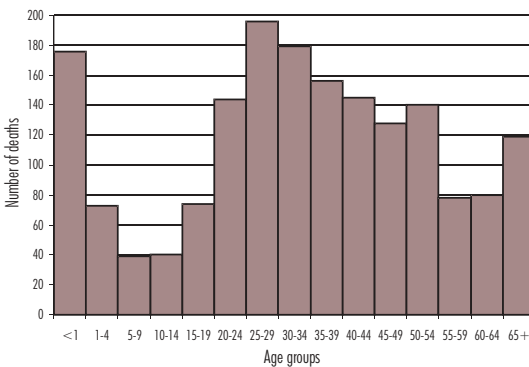


Figure 2e. Undetermined death by age, 2001 (N = 2168).



2001 ($N = 1767$).

High-risk age groups for the different manners of death are 20-34 years for homicide (54.8% of all homicides), 25-39 years for transport-related deaths and unintentional injury deaths (40% of all transport deaths and 31.4% of all unintentional injury deaths), and 20-34 years for suicides (46.5% of all suicides). Among the 50-64-year age range transport injuries are the most common cause of non-natural deaths, accounting for nearly a third of cases, followed by homicide. Among those aged 65 years and older nearly a third of all deaths were transport-related, followed by unintentional injuries (21.5%) and homicide (20.9%).

Homicides peaked in the 25-29-year age group (20.2% of all homicides), transport-related deaths in the 30-34-year age group (14.4% of all transport deaths), unintentional injury deaths in the 30-34-year age group (12.4% of all unintentional injuries), and suicides in the 25-29-year age group (16.8% of all suicides).

3.4 MANNER OF DEATH BY SEX AND AGE

The age trends among males (Figures 3a to 3e) were very similar to the overall age trends, which is to be expected since they constitute the bulk of the sample of cases.

With females (Figures 4a to 4e), homicides rose sharply from the ages of 15 years, peaked in the 25-29-year age group and remained a leading cause of death until the 35-39-year age group. The 20-39-year age group accounted for 58.5% of all female homicides (Figure 4a). Transport-related deaths were more evenly distributed across age groups, affecting in particular children from 5-9 years and all females from the ages of 15 to 49 years. Homicides and transport-related deaths account for a similar number of deaths in the 55-59-year age group. Unintentional injury deaths peaked in the very young (1-4 years) and very old age groups (65 years and older) (Figure 4d). Transport and unintentional injuries accounted for a similar number of deaths for the 65 years and older age group. Among females the highest number of undetermined deaths was found among infants younger than 1 year.

Figure 3a. Male homicide by age, 2001 ($N = 8411$).

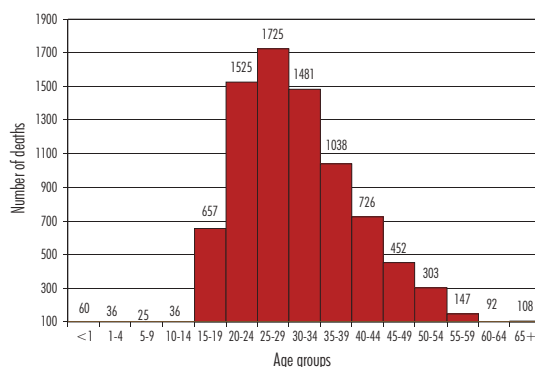


Figure 3b. Male suicide by age, 2001 ($N = 1803$).

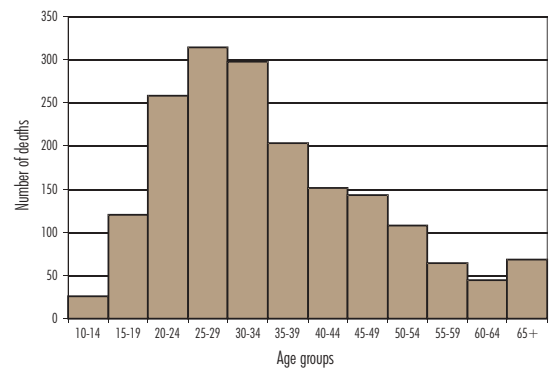


Figure 3c. Male transport deaths by age, 2001 ($N = 4409$).

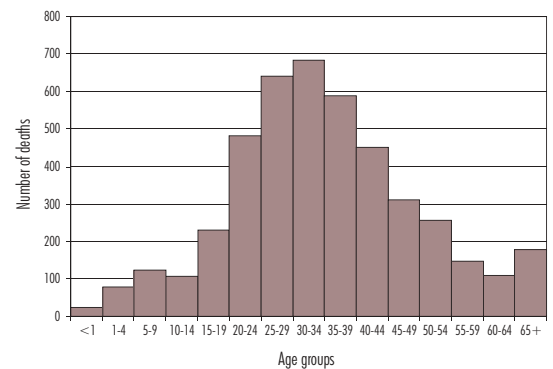


Figure 3d. Male unintentional injury deaths by age, 2001 ($N = 1517$).

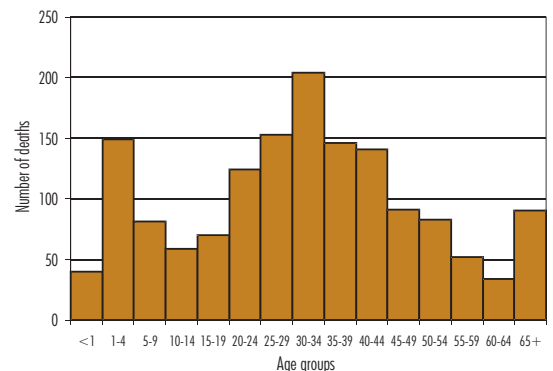


Figure 3e. Male undetermined deaths by age, 2001 ($N = 1120$).

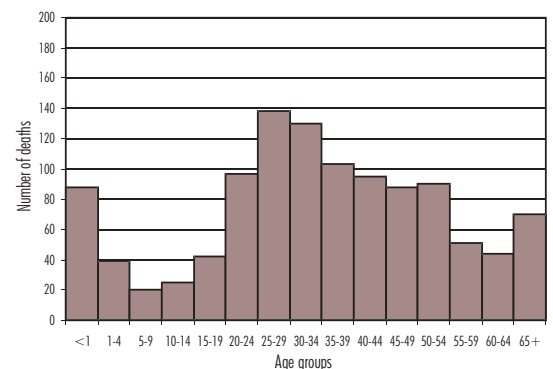


Figure 4a. Female homicide by age, 2001 (N = 1274).

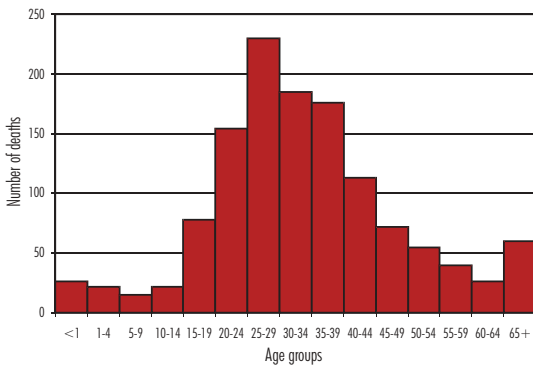


Figure 4b. Female suicide by age, 2001 (N = 400).

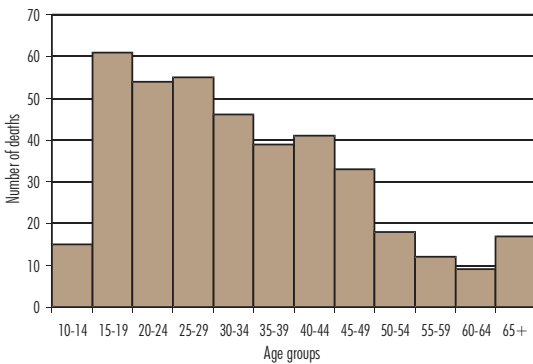


Figure 4c. Female transport deaths by age, 2001 (N = 1358).

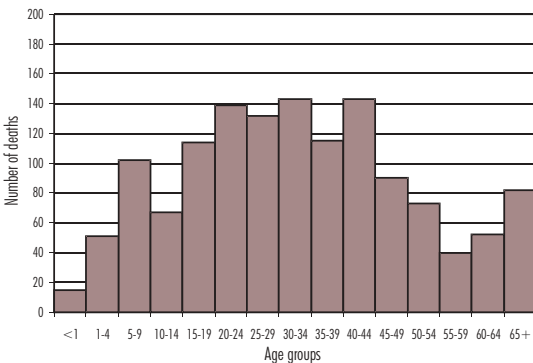


Figure 4d. Female unintentional injury deaths by age, 2001 (N = 636).

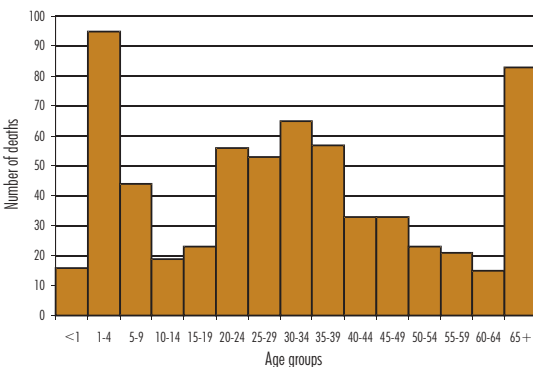
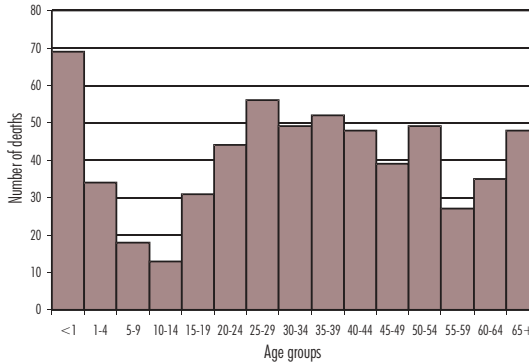


Figure 4e. Female undetermined deaths by age, 2001 (N = 612).



3.5 MANNER OF DEATH BY POPULATION GROUP AND AGE

Among Asians and Whites, where transport-related deaths were the predominant manner of death, deaths rose sharply from 15 years and remained elevated up to 44 years for Asians and 34 years for Whites. Transport-related deaths among Asians and Whites (Figure 5a(3) and Figure 5d(3)) peaked in the 20-24-year age group, accounting for 19% and 17% of transport-deaths among their respective population group groups. Unintentional injury deaths among Asians (Figure 5a(4)) peaked at the 40-44 years and 65 years and older age groups, each accounting for 12.7% of Asian unintentional injury deaths. Among Whites unintentional injury deaths (Figure 5d(4)) peaked in the 65 years and older age group, accounting for more than a quarter (26.6%) of cases. Among Asians suicides peaked in the 20-24-year age group with the bulk of the cases between 15-34 years (54.4% of all suicides among the Asian group). With the Whites (Figure 5d(2)) suicide cases were much older. White cases peaked in the 30-34 and 45-49 year age groups, and the bulk of these cases were found in the 30-49-year age range (49.7% of all suicides among Whites). Among Asians most homicides occurred in the age range 20-34 years, accounting for 42.6% of all such deaths among them.

With Africans (Figures 5b(1)-5b(5)) representing the bulk of all non-natural deaths, their age trends resemble the overall age trend very closely. Homicide was the leading manner of non-natural death among both Africans and Coloureds, with respective peaks among the 25-29- and 20-24-year age groups. Furthermore, with both Africans and Coloureds transport-related deaths peaked in the 30-34-year age group, accounting for 15.8% and 13.1% of deaths respectively. Unintentional injury deaths among Africans (Figure 5b(4)) peaked in the 1-4- and 30-34-year age groups, accounting for 12.8% and 13.4% respectively. Among Coloureds unintentional injury deaths (Figure 5c(4)) peaked in the 30-34-year age group and accounted for 14% of cases.

Figure 5a(1). Asian homicide by age, 2001 (N = 188).

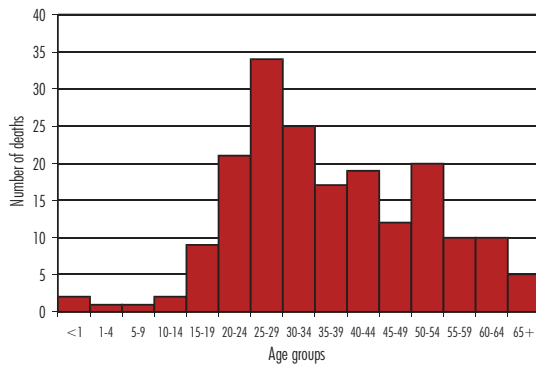


Figure 5a(2). Asian suicide by age, 2001 (N = 129).

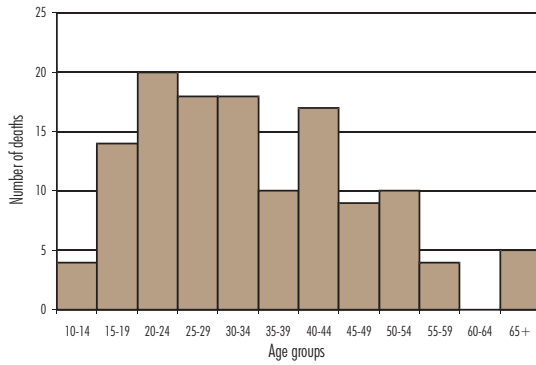


Figure 5a(3). Asian transport deaths by age, 2001 (N = 273).

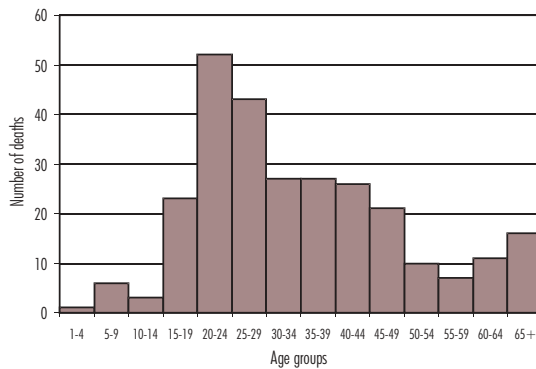


Figure 5a(4). Asian unintentional injury deaths by age, 2001 (N = 55).

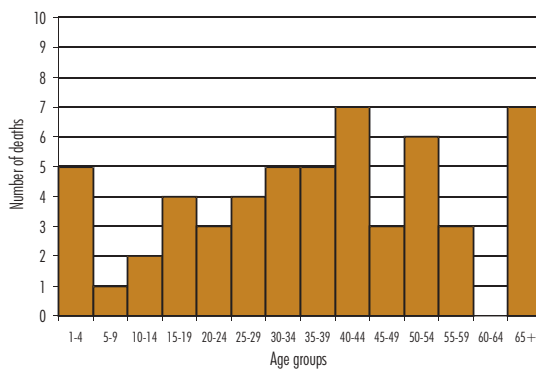


Figure 5a(5). Asian undetermined death by age, 2001 (N = 56).

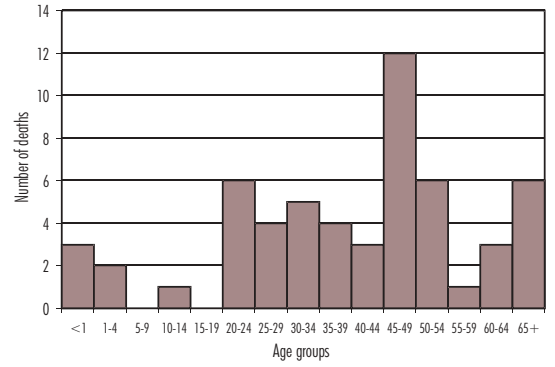


Figure 5b(1). African homicide by age, 2001 (N = 7698).

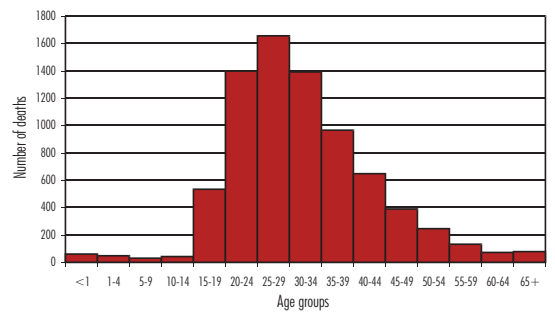


Figure 5b(2). African suicide by age, 2001 (N = 1207).

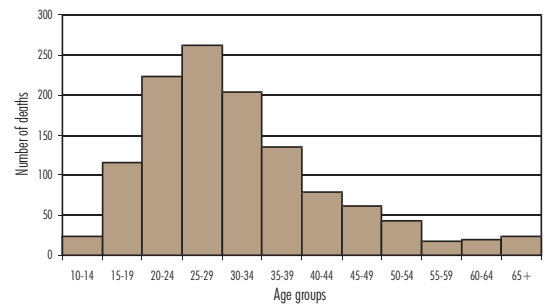


Figure 5b(3). African transport deaths by age, 2001 (N = 4012).

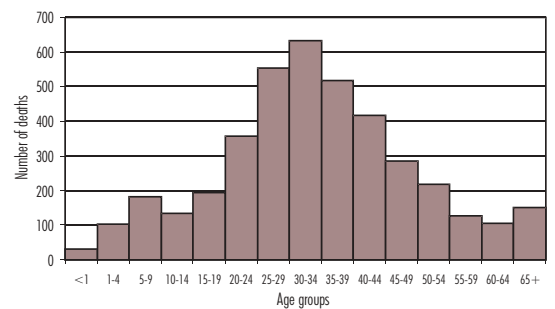


Figure 5b(4). African unintentional injury deaths by age, 2001 (N = 1557).

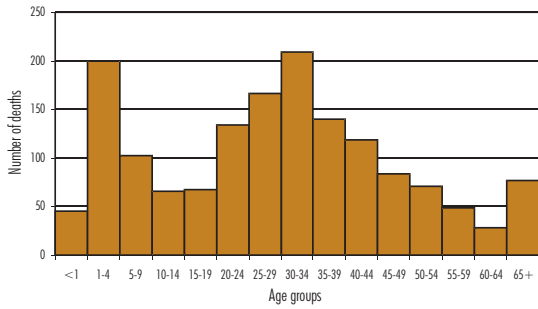


Figure 5b(5). African undetermined death by age, 2001 (N = 1174).

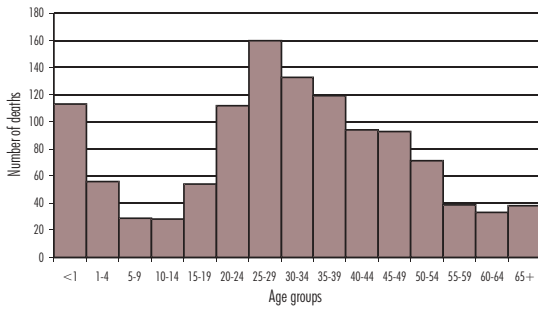


Figure 5c(1). Coloured homicide by age, 2001 (N = 1335).

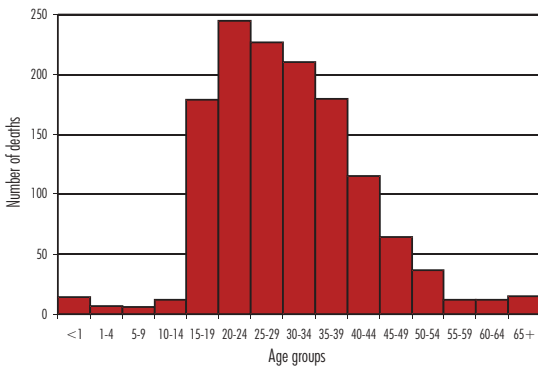


Figure 5c(2). Coloured suicide by age, 2001 (N = 190).

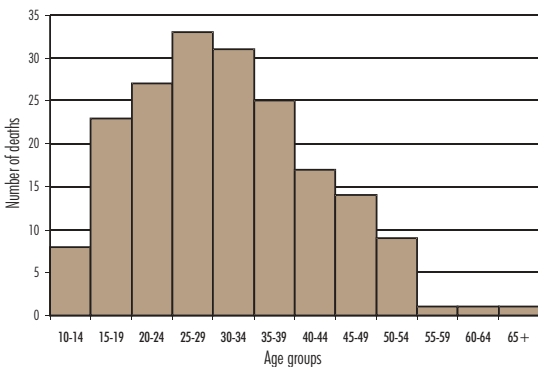


Figure 5c(3). Coloured transport deaths by age, 2001 (N = 656).

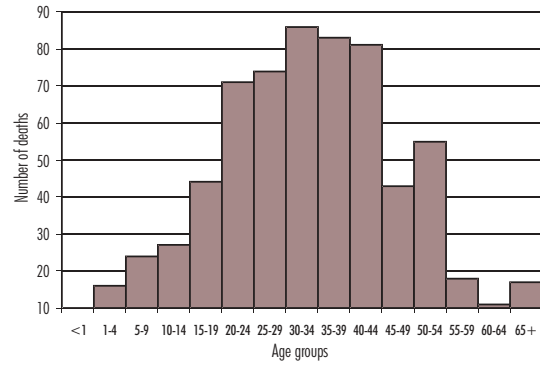


Figure 5c(4). Coloured unintentional injury deaths by age, 2001 (N = 264).

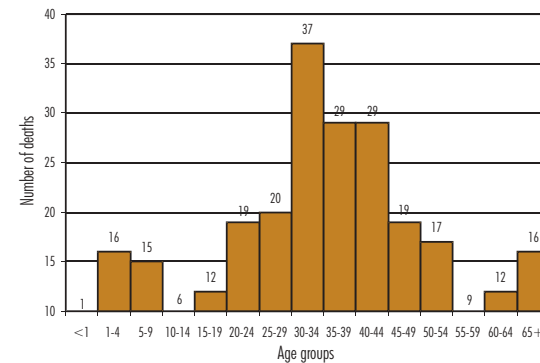


Figure 5c(5). Coloured undetermined death by age, 2001 (N = 234).

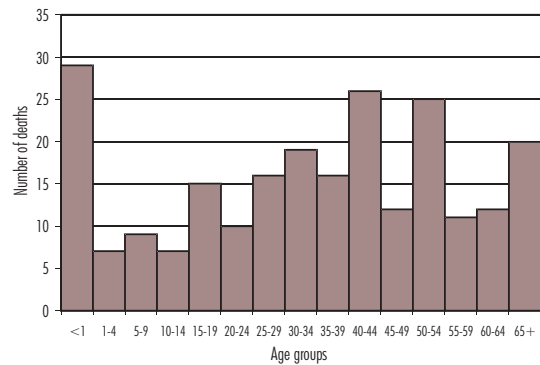


Figure 5d(1). White homicide by age, 2001 (N = 465).

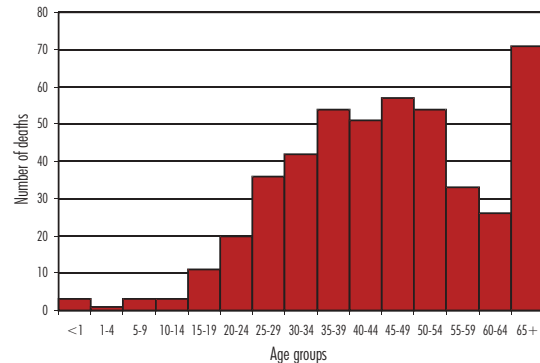


Figure 5d(2). White suicide by age, 2001 (N = 676).

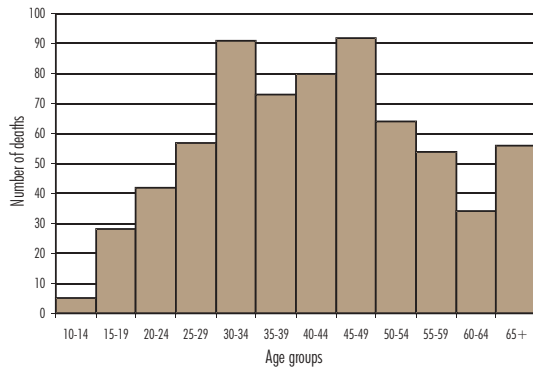


Figure 5d(3). White transport deaths by age, 2001 (N = 831).

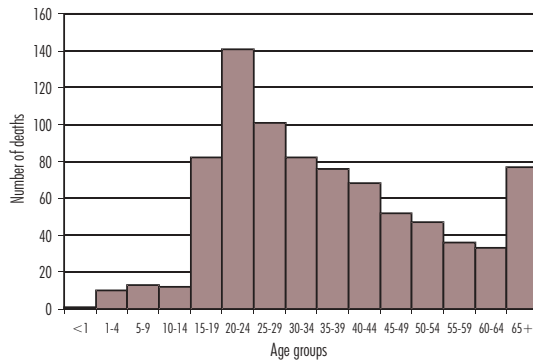


Figure 5d(4). White unintentional injury deaths by age, 2001 (N = 278).

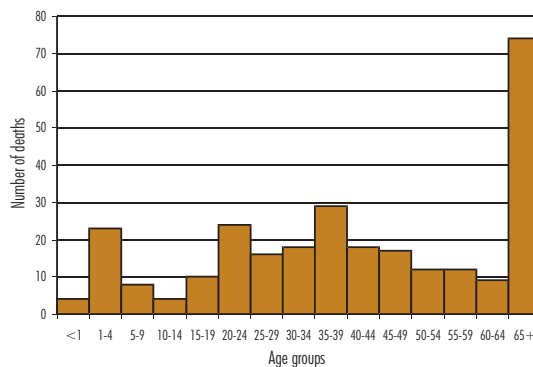
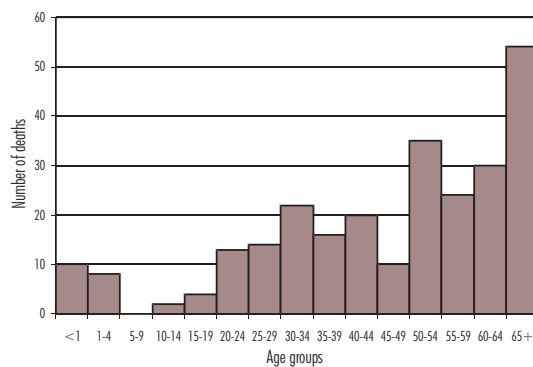


Figure 5d(5). White undetermined death by age, 2001 (N = 262).

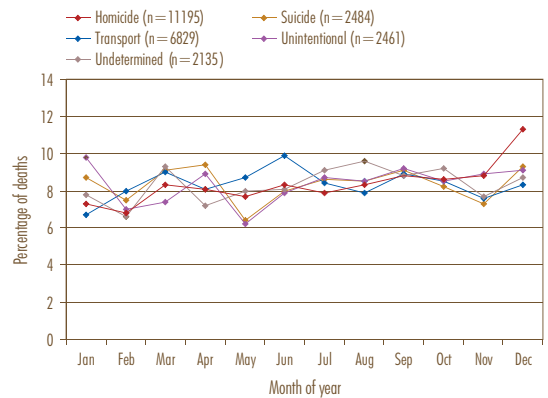


3.6 MANNER OF NON-NATURAL DEATH, SEASONAL TRENDS

The percentage of homicides was similar for the months starting from January to October 2001, after which it increased in November and peaked in December. Figure 6 shows the percentage of non-natural deaths by manner of death and month of year.

In 2001 the lowest percentage of suicides was found in May, with peaks in April and December. Transport-related deaths peaked in June, during the mid-year break, and it appears that the increased enforcement and education has helped to reduce the percentage of road traffic injuries during the Easter and Christmas periods. The percentage of unintentional injury deaths was high in December and peaked in January, with the lowest percentage occurring in May.

Figure 6. Manner of non-natural death by month of year, 2001 (N = 25 104).



3.7 MANNER OF NON-NATURAL DEATH, PROVINCIAL VARIATIONS

The highest percentage of homicides was found in the Western Cape (51.6%), unintentional injury deaths in the Northern Cape (18.7%), transport-related deaths in Mpumalanga (42%), and suicides in the Northern Cape (14.3%). Figures 7a to 7g show the manner of non-natural death per province for 2001. The Northern Province, Free State and North West Province had relatively smaller case-loads and were grouped under Other Provinces (Figure 7g).

Figure 7a. Eastern Cape, manner of non-natural death, 2001 (N = 3232).

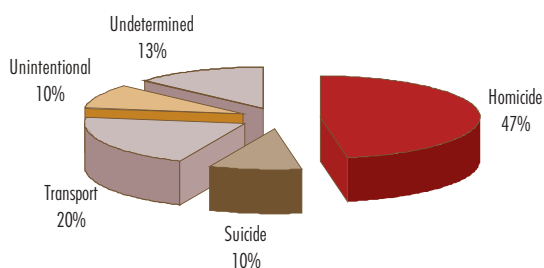


Figure 7b. Gauteng, manner of non-natural death, 2001 (N = 10 969).

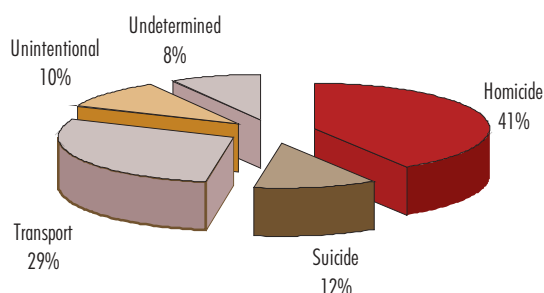


Figure 7c. KwaZulu-Natal, manner of non-natural death, 2001 (N = 4483).

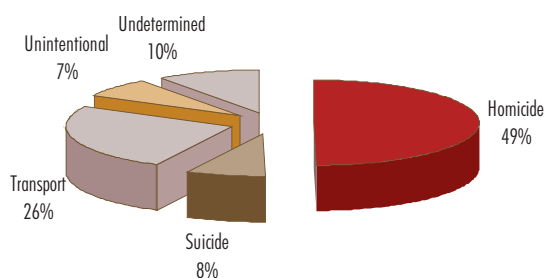


Figure 7d. Mpumalanga, manner of non-natural death, 2001 (N = 1534).

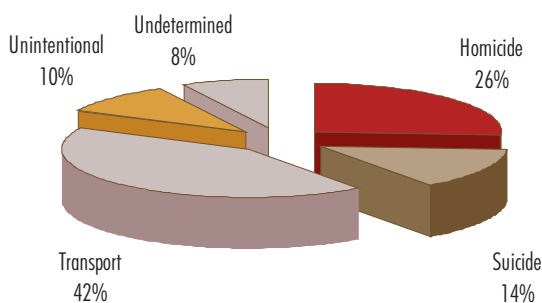


Figure 7e. Northern Cape, manner of non-natural death, 2001 (N = 342).

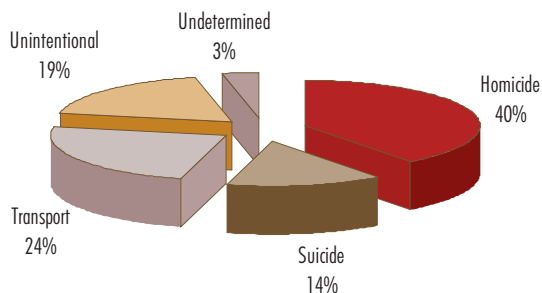


Figure 7f. Western Cape, manner of non-natural death, 2001 (N = 4719).

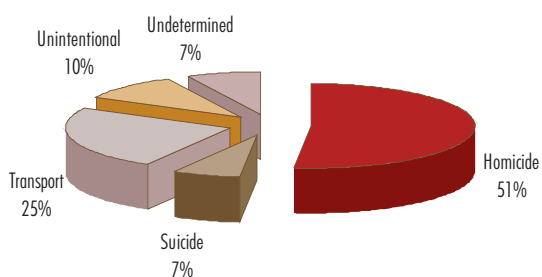


Figure 7g. Other Provinces, manner of non-natural death, 2001 (N = 78).

