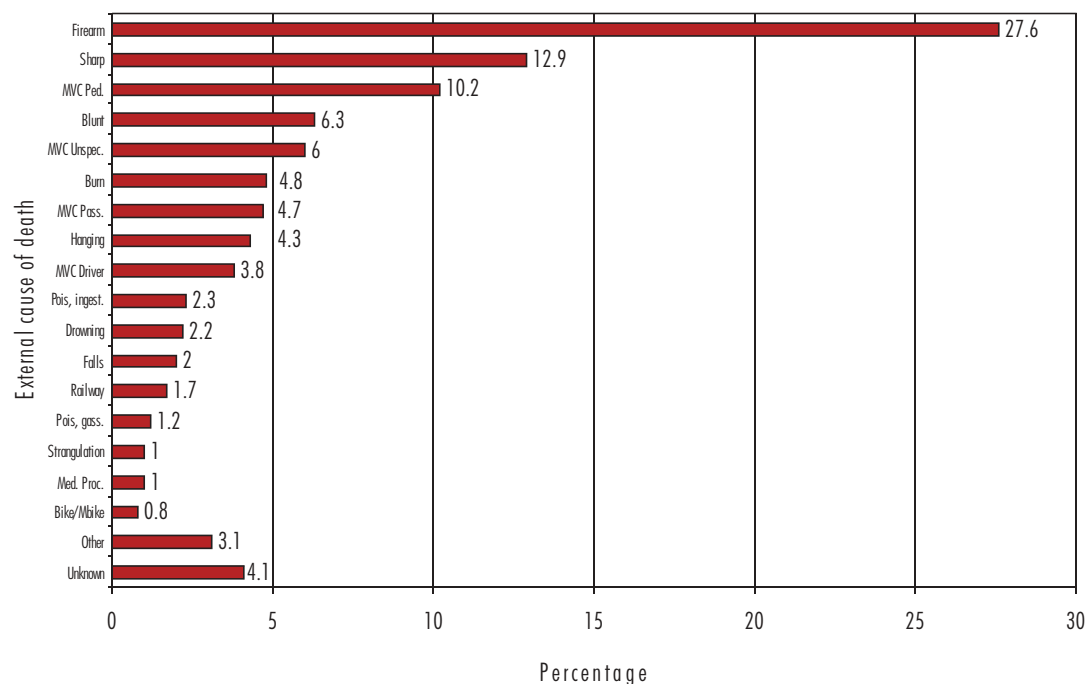


# CHAPTER 4. EXTERNAL CAUSES OF NON-NATURAL DEATH

*Compiled by Megan Prinsloo*

Firearms overshadowed all other external causes of non-natural deaths, accounting for 27.6% of deaths (Figure 8). There was a difference of more than 700 deaths between the total number of firearm deaths and deaths due to the four different categories of motor vehicle collisions combined.

*Figure 8. External causes of non-natural death, 2001 (N = 25 361).*



## 4.1 EXTERNAL CAUSES OF NON-NATURAL DEATH BY SEX

For both sexes gunshots were the major external cause of death. However, the percentage of firearm deaths was twice that for any other cause for males. For females it was only 2% more than motor vehicle collision (MVC) pedestrian deaths. Furthermore, the percentage of males killed by firearms was more than double the females. The percentage of male deaths also outnumbered that for females for sharp objects, blunt objects, hangings, driver MVCs, bicycle/motorcycle collisions and railway cases. Second and third causes of death for males were sharp objects and pedestrian MVCs; for females they were pedestrian MVCs and burns. The percentage of burn deaths in females greatly outnumbered that for males - by 6.5%. Figure 9 shows the external causes of death for males and females.

## 4.2 EXTERNAL CAUSES OF NON-NATURAL DEATH BY AGE

In children aged 1 to 4, burns and drowning were the most frequent cause of death, while from 5 to 14 years of age pedestrian injuries were the major cause. For the 15 to 64-year age range firearms were the major cause of injury deaths, followed by sharp instruments for 15 to 44-year-olds, and pedestrian MVCs for those aged 45 to 64 years. Among those 65 years and older pedestrian injuries

followed by firearms were the most frequent causes of death. Deaths in infants younger than 1 year included fetal, neonatal and perinatal deaths. These included abortions and concealment of birth or abandoned babies, and accounted for 22.6% of deaths in those younger than 1 year. Table IV displays the frequency ranking of the top 10 external causes by age group.

Figure 9. External causes of non-natural death by sex, 2001 (N = 25 040).

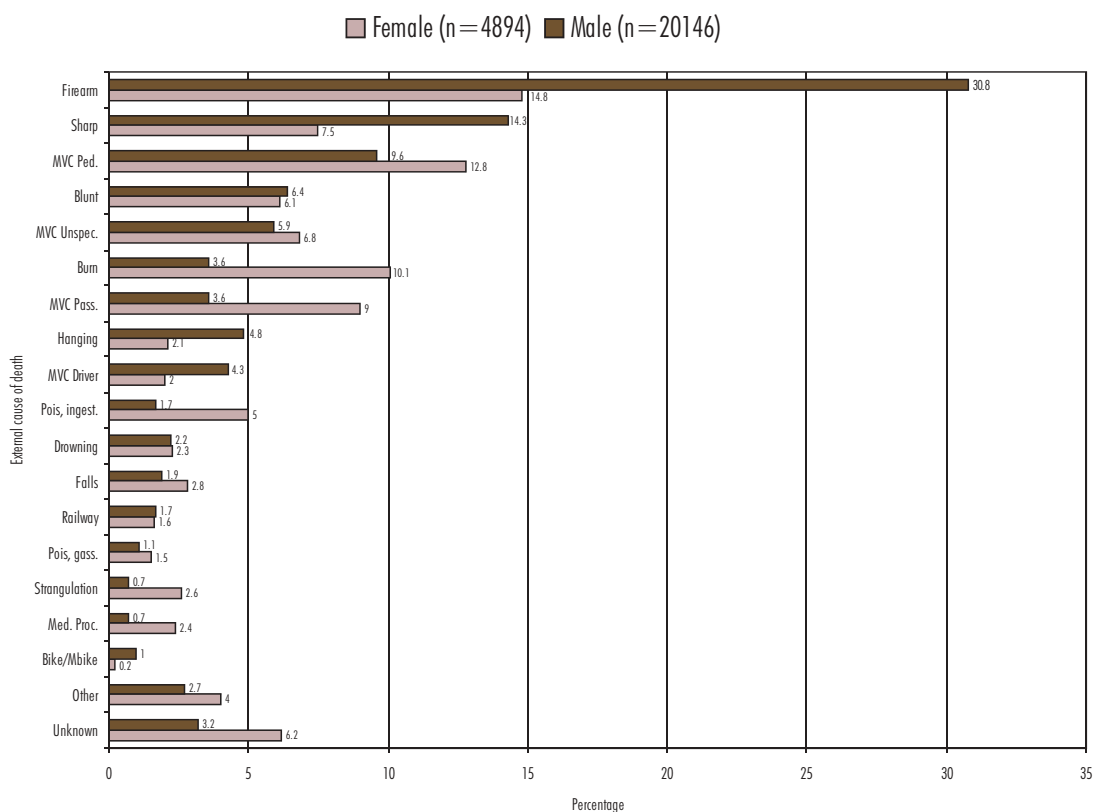


Table IV. Ten leading external causes of non-natural death by age, 2001.

Rank	<1	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Overall ranking*
1	Abortion 50	Burn 103	MVC ped. 138	MVC ped. 94	Firearm 423	Firearm 1071	Firearm 2421	Firearm 1206	Firearm 574	Firearm 207	MVC ped. 105	Firearm 6088
2	Abandon. baby 31	Drowning 83	Drowning 67	MVC pass. 40	Sharp 276	Sharp 514	Sharp 1055	Sharp 628	MVC ped. 268	MVC ped. 137	Firearm 98	Sharp 2869
3	Sharp 25	MVC ped. 71	MVC pass. 51	Firearm 35	MVC ped. 106	MVC ped. 174	MVC ped. 521	MVC ped. 423	Sharp 239	MVC unspec. 91	MVC unspec. 84	MVC ped. 2053
4	Burn 19	Poison ingest. 39	Burn 44	Drowning 35	MVC pass. 92	Blunt 174	Blunt 392	Blunt 328	MVC unspec. 179	Blunt 89	Falls 76	Blunt 1345
5	MVC Ped. 16	MVC unspec. 28	MVC unspec. 34	MVC unspec. 34	Hanging 84	Hanging 161	MVC unspec. 372	MVC unspec. 304	Blunt 163	Sharp 63	Burn 73	MVC unspec. 1339
6	Drowning 16	MVC pass. 27	Firearm 21	Burn 23	Blunt 82	MVC pass. 145	Hanging 319	MVC driver 237	Burn 118	MVC driver 57	Blunt 56	Burn 1072
7	MVC pass. 15	Blunt 25	Blunt 17	Hanging 23	MVC unspec. 70	MVC unspec. 138	Burn 303	Burn 213	MVC pass. 118	Burn 49	Sharp 39	MVC pass. 1070
8	Strangulation 13	Firearm 20	Falls 9	Sharp 17	Poison ingest. 51	MVC driver 110	MVC pass. 291	MVC pass. 213	MVC driver 115	MVC pass. 46	MVC pass. 32	Hanging 953
9	Firearm 12	Falls 20	Poison ingest. 9	Poison ingest. 14	Drowning 37	Burn 102	MVC driver 286	Hanging 183	Hanging 110	Falls 44	MVC driver 29	MVC driver 861
10	Blunt 10	Strangulation 12	Strangulation 6	Blunt 9	Bike/m'bike 34	Poison ingest. 61	Poison ingest. 140	Poison ingest. 105	Poison ingest. 72	Hanging 43	Hanging 27	Poison ingest. 530