

## Johannesburg

Compiled by Stephanie Burrows and Christine Harris

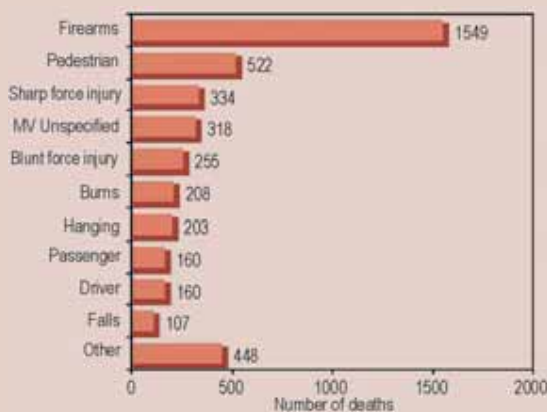
In the 2003 calendar year a total of 5535 deaths presented to the four mortuaries that dealt with injury cases occurring in Johannesburg (Johannesburg, Diepkloof, Roodepoort and Germiston), including 774 (14%) deaths due to natural causes, and another 497 where the cause of death was undetermined. The analysis that follows is restricted to the remaining 4264 non-natural deaths due to violence, suicide, transport collisions and other unintentional injuries.

### 4.1 EXTERNAL CAUSE OF DEATH

The cause of death was unknown in 36 (0.8%) of the 4262 cases. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was firearms (36.6%), followed by pedestrian fatalities (12.3%), sharp force injuries (7.9%), and motor vehicle fatalities with unspecified users (7.5%).

Figure 69

Leading external causes of death (N = 4264)

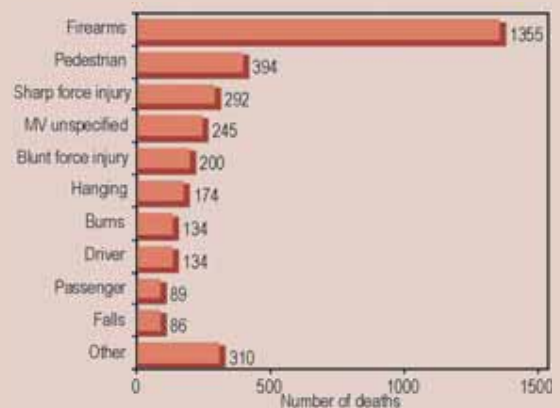


#### 4.1.1 External cause of death, by sex

There were approximately 5 male violence and injury deaths for every female death. Among males, the cause of death was unknown in 20 (0.6%) of the 2429 cases. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was firearms (39.7%), followed by pedestrian fatalities (11.6%), sharp force injuries (8.6%) and motor vehicle fatalities with unspecified users (7.2%).

Figure 70

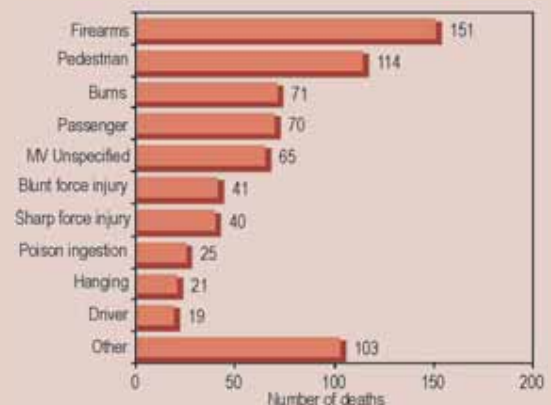
Leading external causes of death among males (N = 3429)



Among females the cause of death was unknown in 13 (1.8%) of the 720 cases. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was firearms (21.4%), followed by pedestrian fatalities (16.1%), burns (10.0%) and passenger fatalities (9.9%).

Figure 71

Leading external causes of death among females (N = 720)

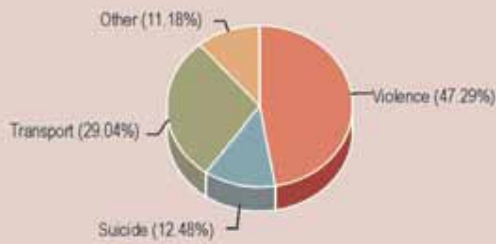


### 4.2 Apparent manner of death

The leading apparent manner of non-natural death in Johannesburg was violence (47.5%), followed by transport (29.0%).

Figure 72

Overall apparent manner of death (N = 4264)

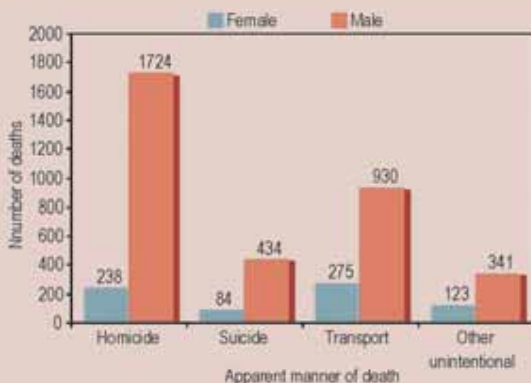


#### 4.2.1 Apparent manner of death, by sex

The leading cause of death among males was violence, which accounted for 50.3% of male deaths, followed by transport (27.1%). The leading cause of death among females was transport (38.2%), followed by violence (33.1%). There were 7 male deaths due to violence for every female death from the same cause. The ratios for suicide, transport and other unintentional injuries were 5.2, 3.4 and 2.8 respectively.

Figure 73

Apparent manner of death, by sex (N = 4149)



#### 4.2.2 Apparent manner of death, by age

The average age at death was 33.1 ( $\pm$  14.8) years. The leading apparent manners of death among the various age groups were as follows:

- 0-14 years — transport (42.3%);
- 15-24 years — violence (51.8%);
- 25-34 years — violence (55.7%);
- 35-44 years — violence (49.4%);
- 45-54 years — violence (42.2%);
- 55-64 years — transport (36.8%); and
- 65+ years — transport (44.2%).

Figure 74.1

Violence-related deaths by age (N = 1476)

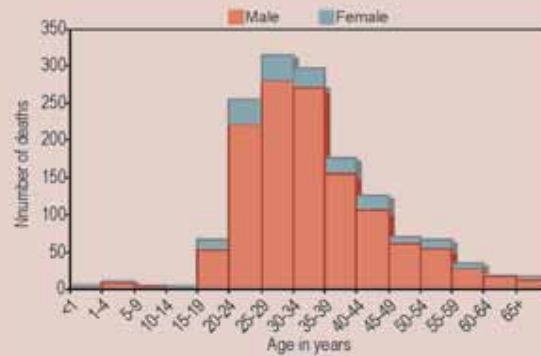


Figure 74.2

Suicide by age (N = 440)

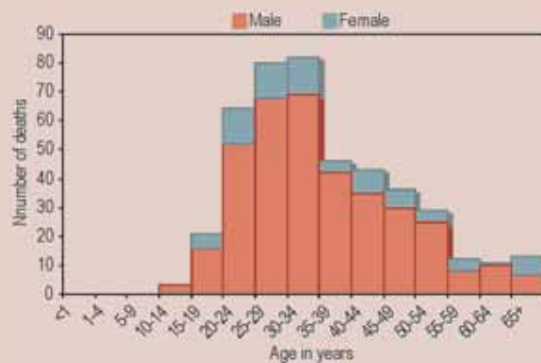


Figure 74.3

Transport-related deaths by age (N = 821)

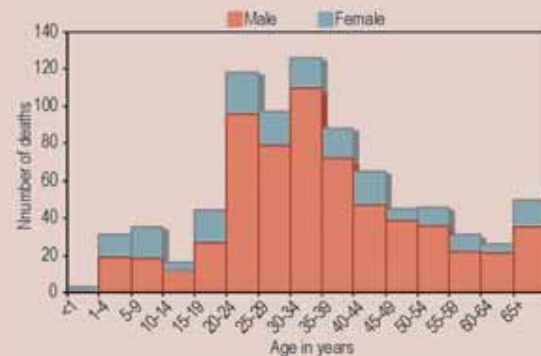
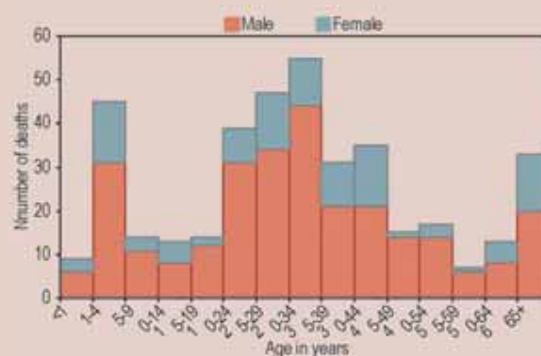


Figure 74.4

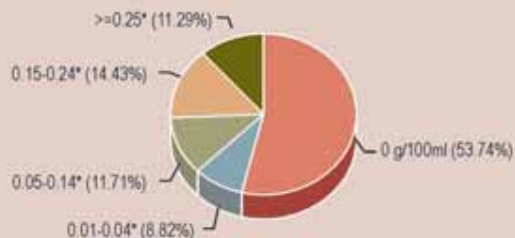
Deaths from other unintentional injuries by age (N = 387)



### 4.2.3 Apparent manner of death by blood alcohol concentration

Blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels were obtained in 2834 of the 4264 cases. The average BAC for those who tested positive was  $0.16 \pm 0.11$  g/100 ml.

Figure 75  
Blood alcohol levels (N = 2834)

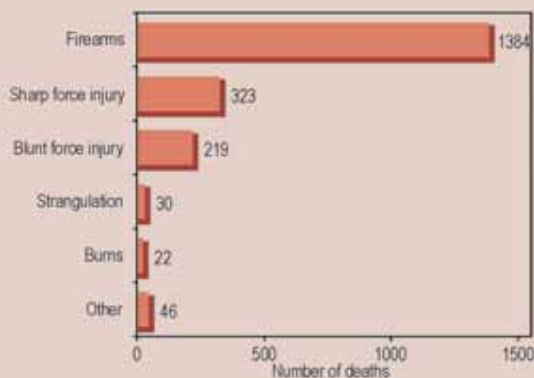


More transport-related (51.7%) and violence-related (46.3%) fatalities tested alcohol-positive than the other manners of death. Among the positive cases the transport-related fatalities had the highest mean BAC (Table XI).

### 4.3 VIOLENCE

The cause of death was unknown in 16 (0.8%) of the 2024 violence-related deaths. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was firearms (68.9%), followed by sharp force injuries (16.1%), blunt force injuries (10.9%) and strangulation (1.5%).

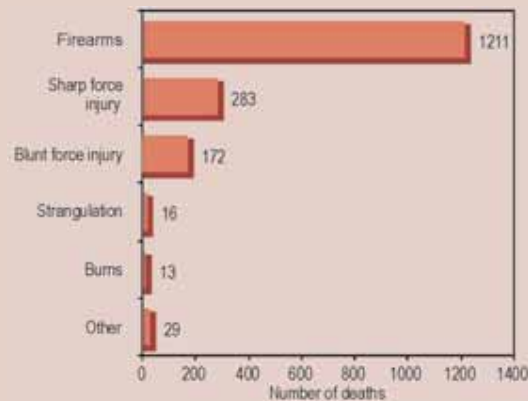
Figure 76  
Leading external causes of violence-related deaths (N = 2024)



### 4.3.1 External cause of violent death, by sex

There were 7 male deaths as a result of violence for every female death. Among males the cause of death was unknown in 7 (0.4%) of the 1724 cases. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was firearms (70.5%), followed by sharp force injuries (16.5%), blunt force injuries (10.0%) and strangulation (0.9%).

Figure 77  
Leading external causes of violence-related deaths among males (N = 1724)



Among females the cause of death was unknown in 6 (2.5%) of the 238 cases. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was firearms (57.3%), followed by sharp force injuries (16.4%), blunt force injuries (14.7%) and strangulation (5.2%).

Figure 78  
Leading external causes of violence-related death among females (N = 238)

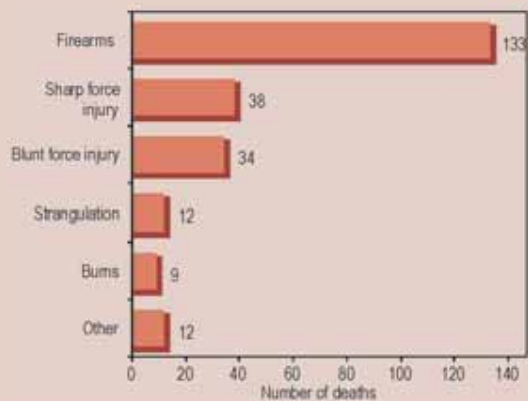


Table XI

Blood alcohol levels (g/100 ml) by apparent manner of death

Apparent manner of death	BACs done N	BAC positive N	Mean BAC	Std dev.
Violence (2024)	1447 (71.5)	670 (46.3)	0.15	0.10
Suicide (530)	437 (82.5)	178 (40.7)	0.13	0.11
Transport (1236)	745 (60.3)	385 (51.7)	0.20	0.12
Other unintentional (474)	205 (43.2)	78 (38.0)	0.16	0.12
<b>Total (4264)</b>	<b>2834</b>	<b>1311</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.11</b>

### 4.3.2 External cause of violent death, by age

Age was unknown in 520 (25.7%) of the 2024 cases. Of the remaining cases, the average age at death was 32 ( $\pm$  11.7) years. The leading external causes of violence-related deaths in the various age groups were as follows:

- **0-14 years** — firearms and blunt force injuries (each 25%);
- **15-24 years** — firearms (69.7%) followed by sharp force injury (19.9%);
- **25-34 years** — firearms (74%) followed by sharp force injury (15.2%);
- **35-44 years** — firearms (67.3%) followed by sharp force injury (15.7%);
- **45-54 years** — firearms (70.9%) followed by sharp force injury (15.7%);
- **55-64 years** — firearms (72.7%) followed by blunt force injury (18.2%); and
- **65+ years** — firearms (66.7%) followed by strangulation (16.7%).

### 4.3.3 Violence and alcohol

More victims of sharp-force violence (74.2%) tested alcohol-positive than those with other external causes of violent death.

### 4.3.4 Violent death by scene of death and sex

The scene of death was unknown in 686 (40%) of male and 86 (36%) of female violence-related deaths. Of the remaining deaths, the most common scene of violent death among:

- **males** was private homes (37.6%) followed by roads (24.7%); and
- **females** was private homes (52%) followed by residential institutes (18.4%).

Figure 79  
Leading scenes of violence-related death among males (N = 1724)

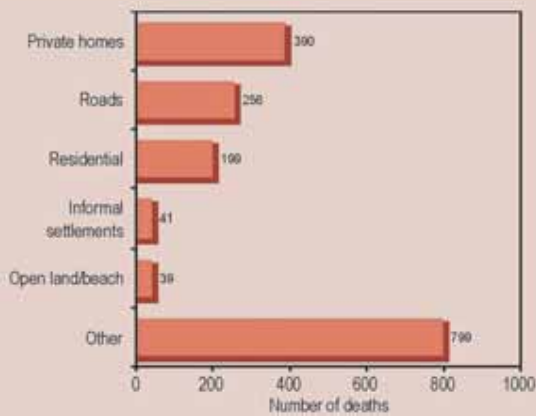


Figure 80  
Leading scenes of violence-related death among females (N = 238)

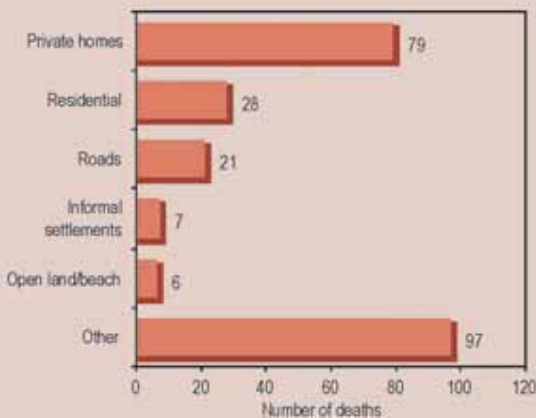


Table XII

Blood alcohol levels (g/100 ml) by external cause of violent death

External cause	BACs done N (%)	BAC positive N (%)	Mean BAC	Std dev.
Firearm (1384)	1044 (75.4)	424 (40.6)	0.14	0.10
Sharp (323)	248 (76.8)	184 (74.2)	0.19	0.10
Blunt (219)	102 (46.6)	37 (36.3)	0.18	0.10
Strangulation (30)	22 (73.3)	10 (45.5)	0.18	0.14
Burns (22)	4 (18.2)	3 (75)	0.15	0.18
<b>Total (1978)</b>	<b>1420</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.10</b>