

Chapter 6

Durban

Compiled by Suraya Dawad and Anesh Sukhai

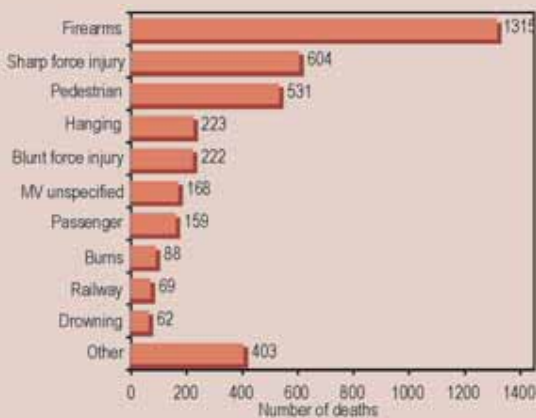
In the 2003 calendar year a total of 5865 deaths presented to the three mortuaries in Durban (Chatsworth, Gale Street and Phoenix), including 251 (4.3%) deaths due to natural causes, 1389 that were either viewed or stored at the mortuaries, and another 381 where the cause of death was undetermined. The analysis that follows is restricted to the remaining 3844 non-natural deaths due to violence, suicide, transport collisions and other unintentional injuries.

6.1 EXTERNAL CAUSE OF DEATH

The cause of death was unknown in 0.3% of the 3844 cases. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was firearms (34.3%), followed by sharp force injuries (15.8%), pedestrian fatalities (13.9%) and hanging (5.8%).

Figure 119

Leading external causes of death (N = 3844)

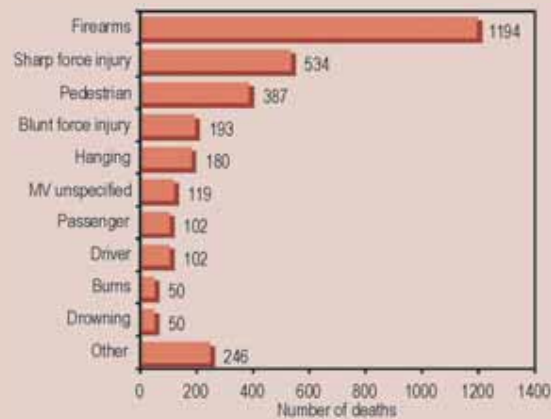


6.1.1 External cause of death, by sex

There were 5 male violence and injury deaths for every such female death. Among males the cause of death was unknown in 0.2 of the 3157 cases. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was firearms (37.9%), followed by sharp force injuries (17%), pedestrian fatalities (12.3%) and blunt force injury (6.1%).

Figure 120

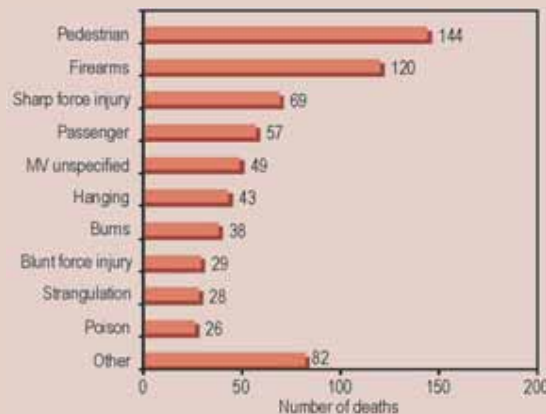
Leading external causes of death among males (N = 3157)



Among females the cause of death was unknown in 0.6% of the 685 cases. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was pedestrian fatalities (21.1%), followed by firearms (17.6%), sharp force injuries (10.1%) and passenger injuries (8.4%).

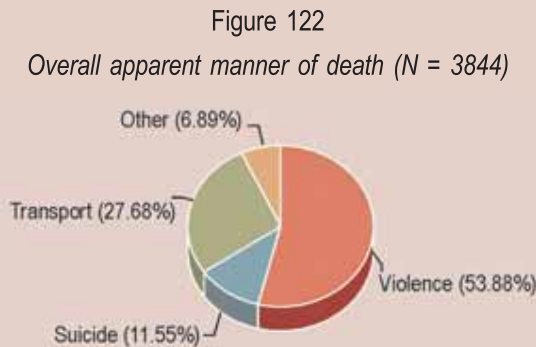
Figure 121

Leading external causes of death among females (N = 685)



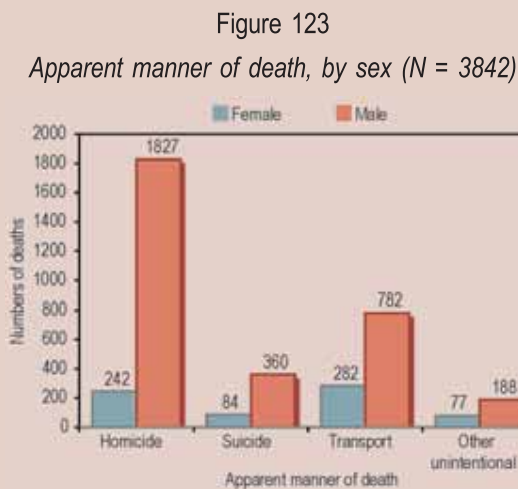
6.2 APPARENT MANNER OF DEATH

The leading cause of non-natural death in Durban was violence (53.9%), followed by transport (27.7%).



6.2.1 Apparent manner of death, by sex

The leading cause of death among males was violence, which accounted for 57.9% of male deaths, followed by transport (24.8%). The leading cause of death among females was transport (41.2%), followed by violence (35.3%). There were 8 male deaths due to violence for every such female death. The ratios for suicide, transport and other unintentional injuries were 4.3, 2.8 and 2.5 respectively.



6.2.2 Apparent manner of death, by age

The average age at death was 30.0 (\pm 14.1) years. The leading apparent manners of death among the various age groups were as follows:

- 0-14 years — transport (51.8%);
- 15-24 years — violence (62.0%);
- 25-34 years — violence (64.0%);
- 35-44 years — violence (53.9%);
- 45-54 years — violence (41.3%) followed by transport (36.7%);
- 55-64 years — violence (39.4%); and
- 65+ years — transport (34.4%).

Figure 124.1

Violence-related deaths by age (N = 2049)

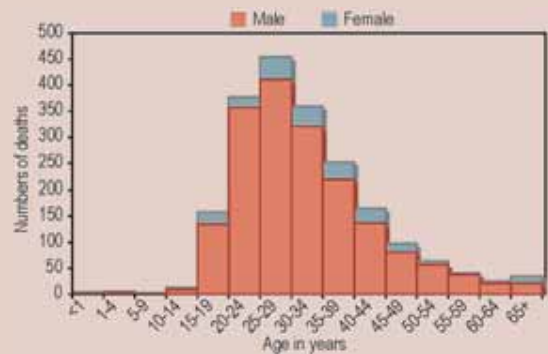


Figure 124.2

Suicide by age (N = 442)

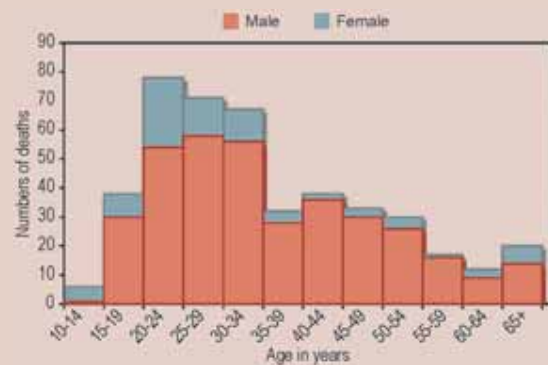


Figure 124.3

Transport-related deaths by age (N = 1057)

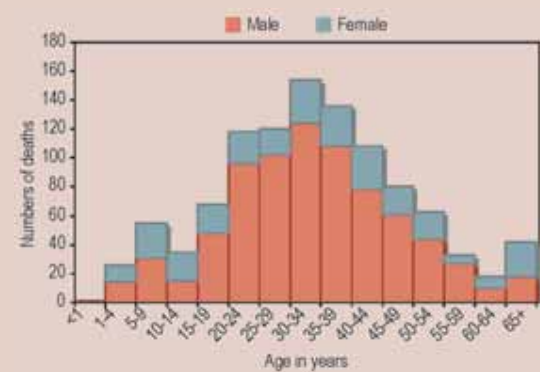
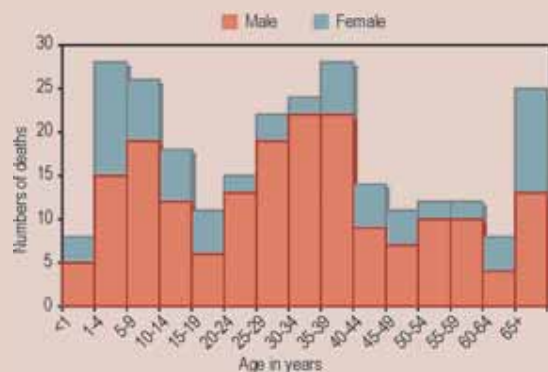


Figure 124.4

Deaths from other unintentional injuries by age (N = 262)



6.2.3 Apparent manner of death by blood alcohol concentration

Blood alcohol concentration (BAC) was obtained in 2051 of the 3844 cases. The average BAC for those who tested positive was 0.18 ± 0.1 g/100 ml.

Figure 125

Blood alcohol levels (N = 2051)



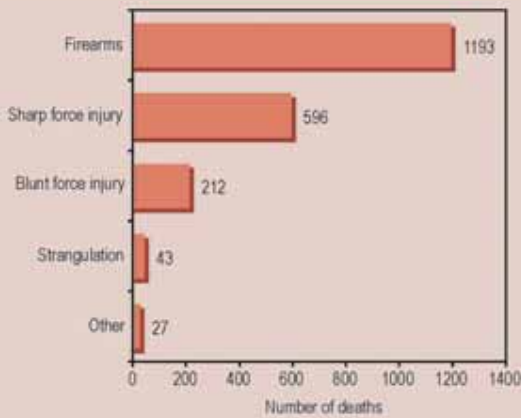
More transport-related (50%) and violent (44%) fatalities tested alcohol-positive. Among the positive cases the transport-related and other unintentional injury deaths had the highest mean BACs.

6.3 VIOLENCE

The cause of death was unknown in 0.3% of the 2071 violence-related deaths. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was firearms (57.8%), followed by sharp force injuries (28.9%), blunt force injury (10.3%) and strangulation (2.1%).

Figure 126

Leading external causes of violence-related deaths (N = 2071)

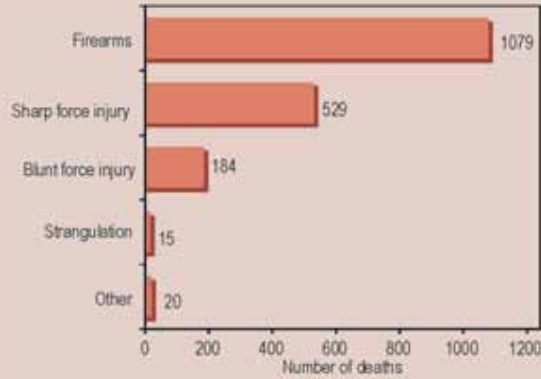


6.3.1 External cause of violent deaths, by sex

There were 8 male deaths as a result of violence for every such female death. Among males the cause of death was unknown in 0.3% of the 1827 cases. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was firearms (59.2%), followed by sharp force injuries (29.0%), blunt force injury (10.1%) and strangulation (0.8%).

Figure 127

Leading external causes of violence-related deaths among males (N = 1827)



Among females the cause of death was unknown in 0.4% of the 242 cases. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was firearms (46.9%), followed by sharp force injuries (27.4%), blunt force injury and strangulation (both 11.6%) and burns (1.2%).

Figure 128

Leading external causes of violence-related death for females (N = 242)

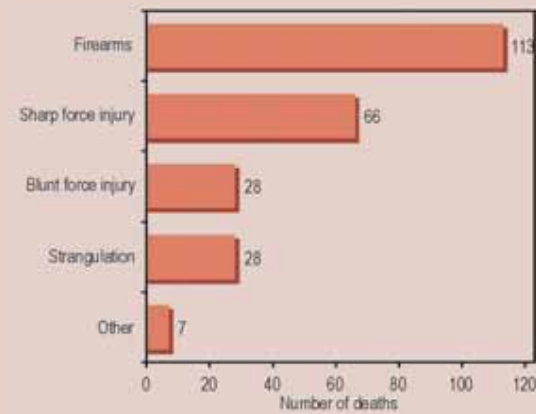


Table XIX

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 (2071)	1273 (61.47)	555 (43.59)	0.16	0.09
Suicide (444)	211 (47.52)	65 (30.81)	0.15	0.08
Transport (1064)	510 (47.93)	256 (50.20)	0.20	0.09
Other unintentional (265)	57 (21.51)	16 (28.07)	0.19	0.12
Total (3844)	2051	892	0.18	0.10

6.3.2 External cause of violent death by age

Age was unknown in 22 of the 2043 cases. Of the remaining cases, the average age at death was 32 (± 11.4) years. The leading external causes of violence-related death in the various age groups were as follows:

- **0-14 years** — firearms (43.5%);
- **15-24 years** — firearms (57.8%) followed by sharp force injury (31.4%);
- **25-34 years** — firearms (58.8%) followed by sharp force injury (29.1%);
- **35-44 years** — firearms (59.9%) followed by sharp force injury (25.8%);
- **45-54 years** — firearms (56.5%) followed by sharp force injury (29.8%);
- **55-64 years** — firearms (60.9%) followed by sharp force injury (25.0%); and
- **65+ years** — firearms (40.0%) followed by sharp force injury (31.4%).

6.3.3 Violence and alcohol

More victims of sharp-force (66%) and blunt-force (51%) violence tested alcohol-positive than among other external causes of violent death.

6.3.4 Violent death by scene of death, by sex

The scene of death was unknown in 731 (40%) of male and 70 (29%) of female violence-related deaths. Of the remaining deaths, the most common scenes among:

- **males** were informal settlements (37.1%) followed by roads (21.8%); and
- **females** were informal settlements (42.7%) followed by private homes (20.5%).

Figure 129

Leading scenes of violence-related death among males (N = 1827)

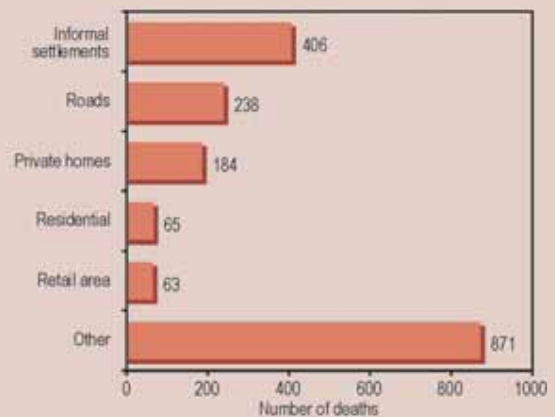
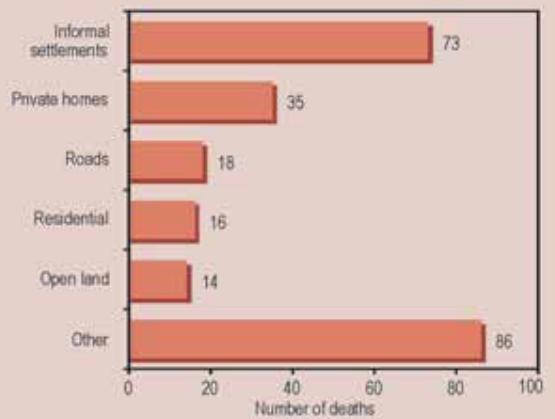


Figure 130

Leading scenes of violence-related death among females (N = 242)



6.4 SUICIDE

The cause of death was unknown in 0.5% of the 444 suicides. Of the remaining deaths, the leading external cause was hanging (50.5%), followed by firearms (27.4%), poison ingestion (11.8%) and falls (4.3%).

Table XX

Blood alcohol levels by external cause of violent death

External cause	BACs done N (%)	BAC positive N (%)	Mean BAC	Std dev.
Firearm (1193)	785 (65.80)	257 (32.74)	0.14	0.08
Sharp (596)	383 (64.26)	252 (65.80)	0.18	0.09
Blunt (212)	82 (38.68)	42 (51.22)	0.17	0.10
Strangulation (43)	17 (4.65)	2 (11.76)	0.18	0.06
Total (2044)	1267	553	0.17	0.08