

## 7.2 BURNS, FALLS, DROWNING AND OTHER ACCIDENT DEATHS

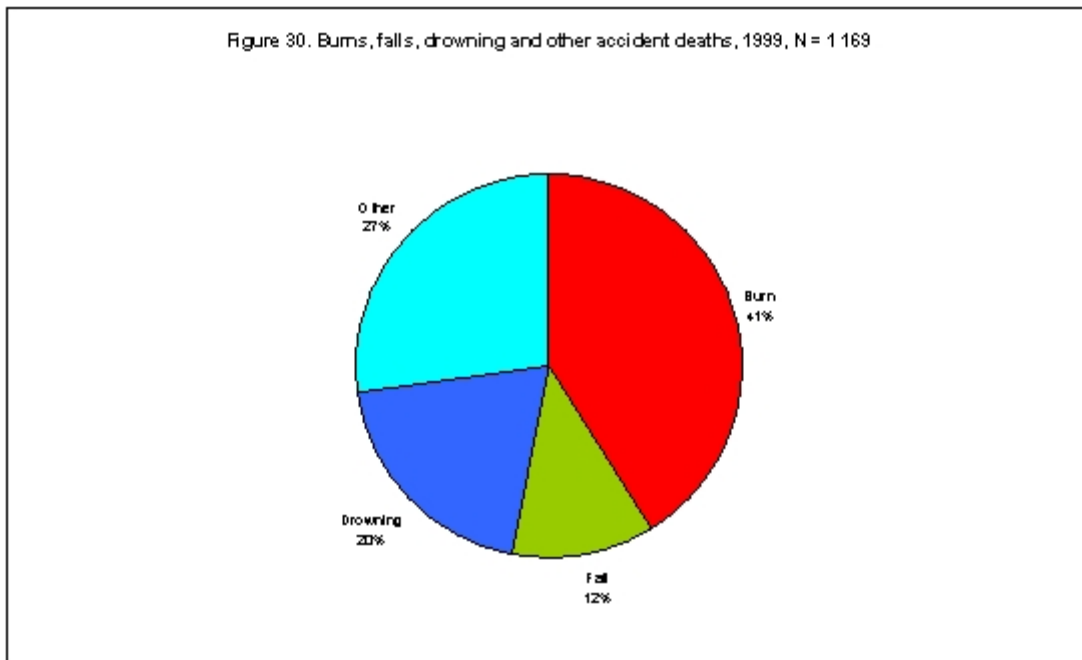
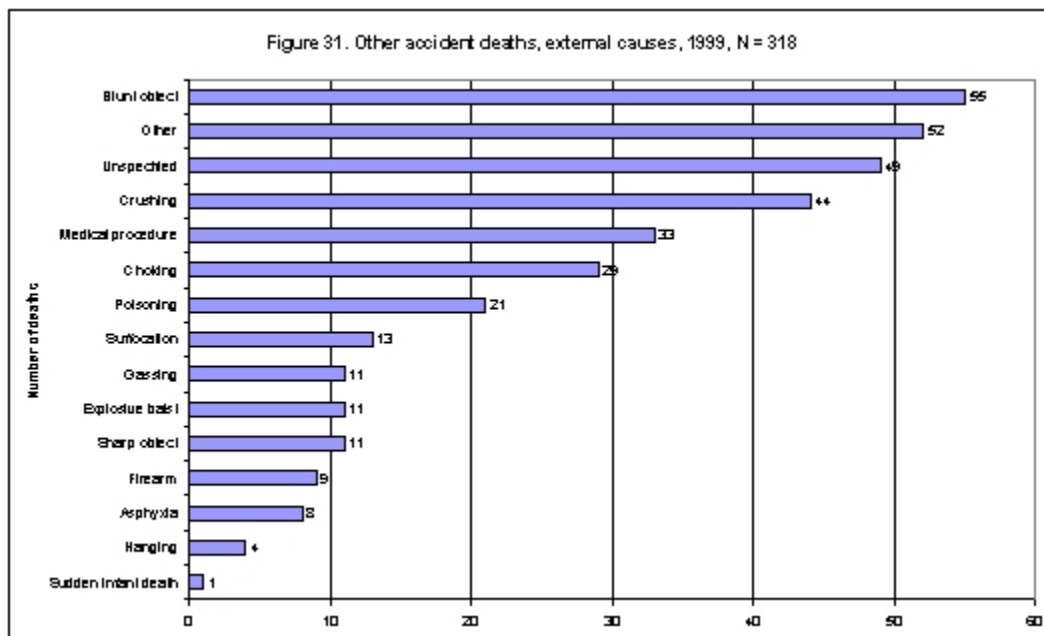


Figure 30 shows that there were 1 169 deaths due to burns, falls, drowning and other accidents. Most were due to burns (41%), followed by other accidents (27%), drowning (20%) and falls (12%).

### 7.2.1 External causes of other accident deaths

Figure 31 shows the external causes for the 318 deaths due to accidents other than burns, falls and drowning. Blunt objects (e.g. falling masonry) were the leading external cause, followed by cases where the external cause was unspecified. Crushing injuries were third



most common, and were incurred mainly as a result of mine accidents. Medical procedures involved mainly anaesthetic deaths, and were concentrated among 35 to 49 year olds. Deaths due to accidental choking and poisoning (e.g. by paraffin ingestion) occurred predominantly among 0 to 4 year olds. Included among the ‘other’ external causes were a person gored by a wildebeest (gnu), two persons who froze to death, and one sports injury.

### 7.2.2 Burns, falls, drowning and other accident deaths, seasonal trends

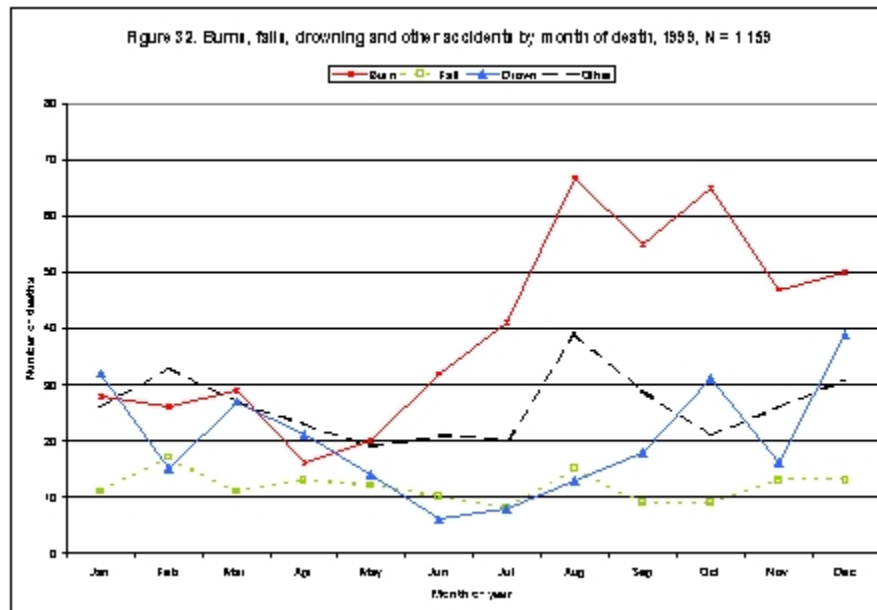


Figure 32 indicates that fall deaths were evenly distributed across January to December, whereas burns and drowning showed marked seasonal fluctuations. Other accidents showed excesses for certain months (e.g. February, August, December) but no systematic trends. Burn deaths averaged around 30 per month from January to March, before decreasing in April and May and then rising dramatically to around 60 per month for August to October, and again decreasing to 50 per month in November and December. Drowning deaths had their lowest frequency in the winter months from May to August and their highest frequencies in the summer holiday periods of December, January and March.

### 7.2.3 Burns, falls, drowning and other accident deaths by sex of victim

Table 16. Burns, falls, drowning and other accident deaths by sex of victim, 1999

	Burns	Drowning	Falls	Other	TOTAL
Male	286 (34.4)	110 (13.2)	196 (23.6)	239 (28.8)	831 (100)
Female	189 (55.9)	29 (8.6)	43 (12.7)	77 (22.8)	338 (100)
M:F ratio	1.5	3.8	4.6	3.1	2.5

As shown in Table 16, the proportion of burn deaths in females (55.9%) was substantially higher than in males (34.4%), whereas drowning deaths were more common in males (13.2%) than in females (8.6%).

Deaths due to falls and other accidents showed the least difference between males and females. Overall, there were 2.5 males for every female death. Falls had the highest male to female ratio (4.6) and burns the lowest (1.5).

#### 7.2.4 Burns, falls, drowning and other accident deaths by victim population group

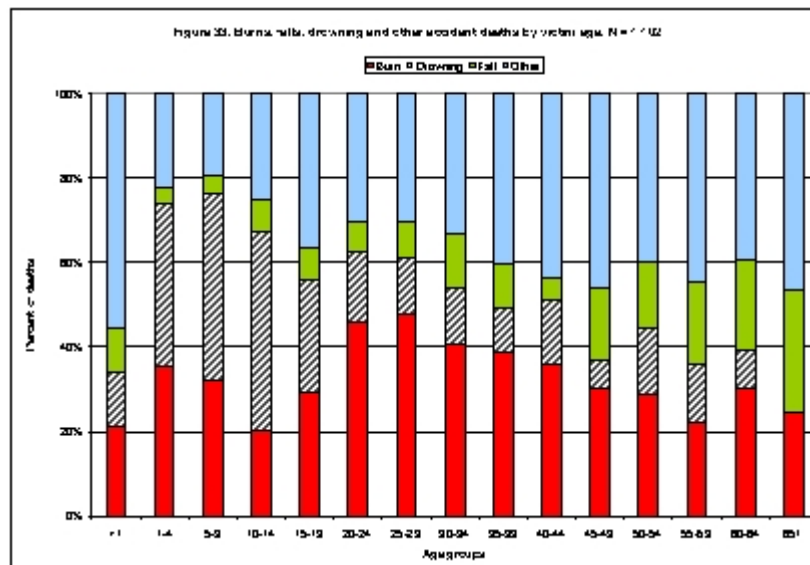
Table 17. Burns, falls, drowning and other accident deaths by victim population group

	Burns	Drowning	Falls	Other	TOTAL
Asian	5 (16.7)	5 (16.7)	8 (26.7)	15 (40.0)	30 (100)
Black	391 (48.5)	67 (8.3)	150 (18.6)	198 (24.6)	806 (100)
Coloured	52 (27.7)	42 (22.3)	45 (23.9)	49 (26.1)	188 (100)
White	25 (18.6)	25 (18.6)	33 (24.6)	51 (38.1)	134 (100)

The percentage of burn deaths in Blacks (48.5%) and Coloureds (27.7%) was substantially higher than in Whites and Asians (both around 17%). The percent of drowning deaths was highest in Coloureds (22.3%) and lowest in Blacks (8.3%). Fall deaths were less frequent in Blacks (18.6%) than in other groups. Deaths due to other accidental causes accounted for around 40% of cases in Asians and Whites as against only a quarter of the deaths in Blacks and Coloureds.

#### 7.2.5 Burns, falls, drowning and other accident deaths by age of victim

Figure 32 shows the proportion of all deaths per age group due to burns, falls, drowning



and other accidents deaths by victim age. Burn deaths had the highest percentage frequency from 20 to 39 years of age, and in children under one year of age accounted for over a fifth of all deaths. Drowning accounted for 5% of deaths in children under one, and over 20% of deaths in children aged 1 to 14. The percentage of fall deaths increased from age 45 onward and was highest among the 65 years and over age group. Death due to other accidental causes accounted for a very high percentage of deaths in children under one year, and 40% or more of the deaths from age 35 onward.

## 7.2.6 Burns, falls, drowning and other accident deaths by scene of injury

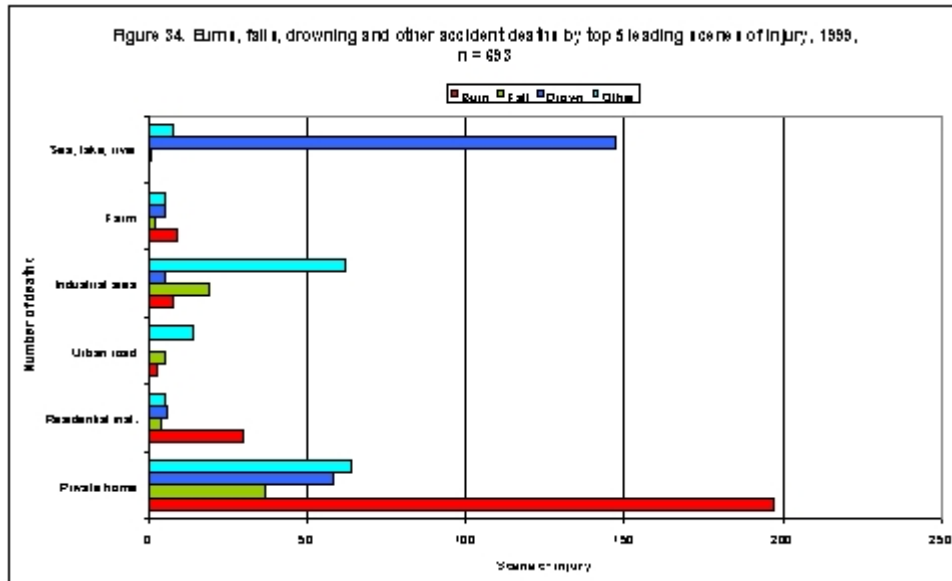
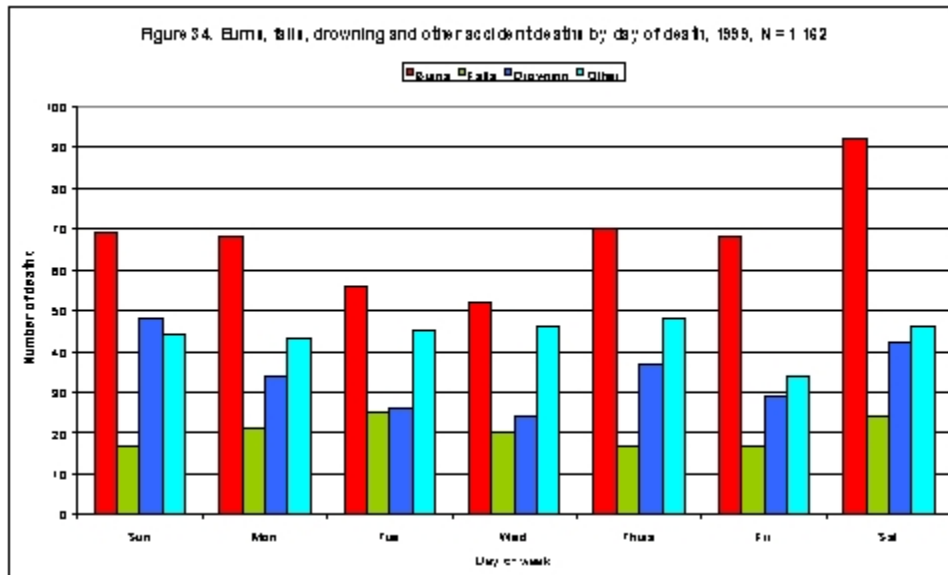
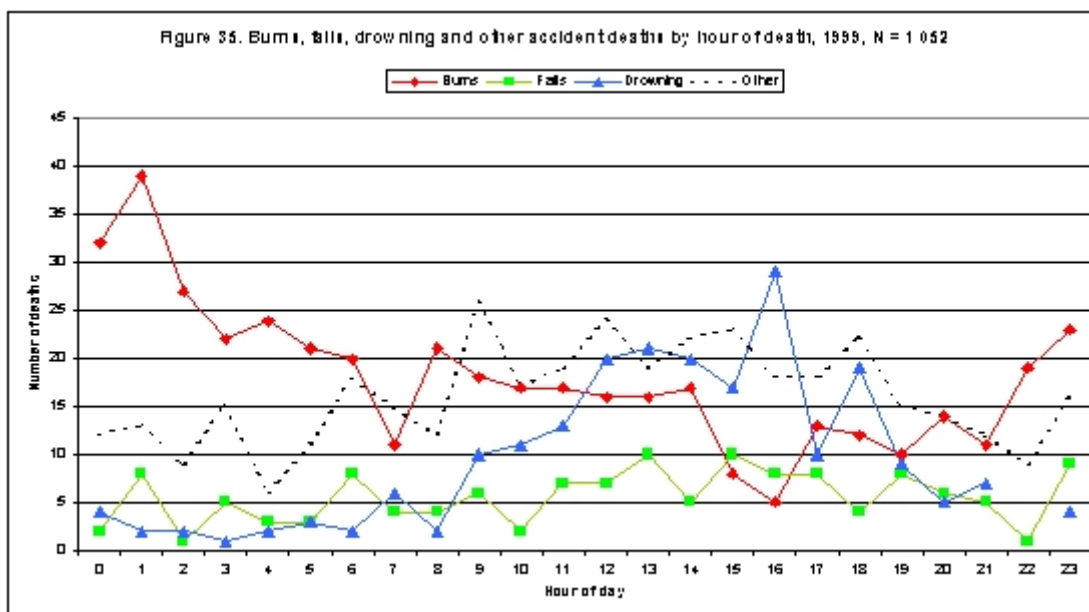


Figure 34 shows that burn deaths occurred most frequently in private homes, and were the leading cause of death in residential institutions (e.g. hostels) and on farms. Drowning deaths were most frequent in the sea, lakes and rivers, although a large number of drownings also occurred in private homes. Fall deaths were most common in private homes, followed by industrial areas. Deaths due to other accidental causes occurred with almost equal frequency in private homes and industrial areas.

## 7.2.7 Burns, falls, drowning and other accident deaths by day and time of death

The day and time of death for burns, falls and drowning appear in Figures 34 and 35.





Drowning was somewhat more frequent on weekends than weekdays, and occurred most often in the morning and early to late afternoon. Burn deaths were more equally spread throughout the week and had their peak frequency in the very early morning from 01:00 to 05:00 and another peak in the evening from 22:00. Fall deaths occurred most often in the afternoon and early evening. Deaths due to other accidental causes were evenly spread across the weekdays, and occurred most often in the daytime, from 08h00 to 18h00.

### 7.2.8 Burns, falls, drowning and other accident deaths by victim blood alcohol content

BACs were obtained for 319 or 28.7% of all deaths due to burns, falls, drowning and other accidents. Figure 36 shows that the majority (61%) of these cases had zero blood alcohol, and that 28% of those with elevated BACS 28% had 0,15 or more g/100ml.

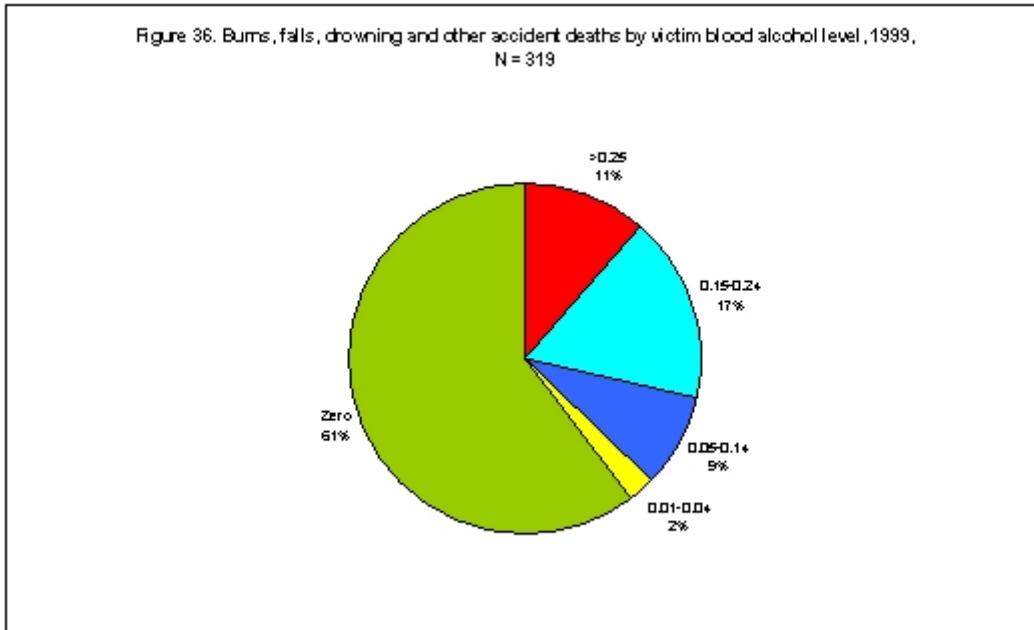


Table 18 indicates that the highest proportion of victims with positive blood alcohol levels was among burn victims where only 41.4% had zero blood alcohol levels, and over a fifth had BACs of 0.25 or greater. Around 40% of the deaths due to drowning and other accidents had elevated blood alcohol levels. Fall deaths had the lowest proportion of cases with elevated blood alcohol levels (29%).

**Table 18. Burns, falls, drowning and other accident deaths by victim blood alcohol content, 1999**

	Burn	Fall	Drown	Other
>0.25	25 (21.6)	2 (5.7)	6 (8.8)	7 (4.1)
0.15-0.24	23 (19.8)	6 (17.1)	14 (20.6)	17 (10.0)
0.05-0.14	17 (14.7)	2 (5.7)	6 (8.8)	6 (3.6)
0.01-0.04	3 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	3 (4.4)	2 (1.2)
Zero	48 (41.4)	25 (71.4)	39 (57.3)	100 (59.2)
TOTAL)	116 (100)	35 (100)	68 (100)	132 (100)
Mean positive BAC ( $\pm$ SD)	0.21 (0.09)	0.19 (0.06)	0.18 (0.09)	0.17 (0.09)

## 8. MANNER OF DEATH UNDETERMINED

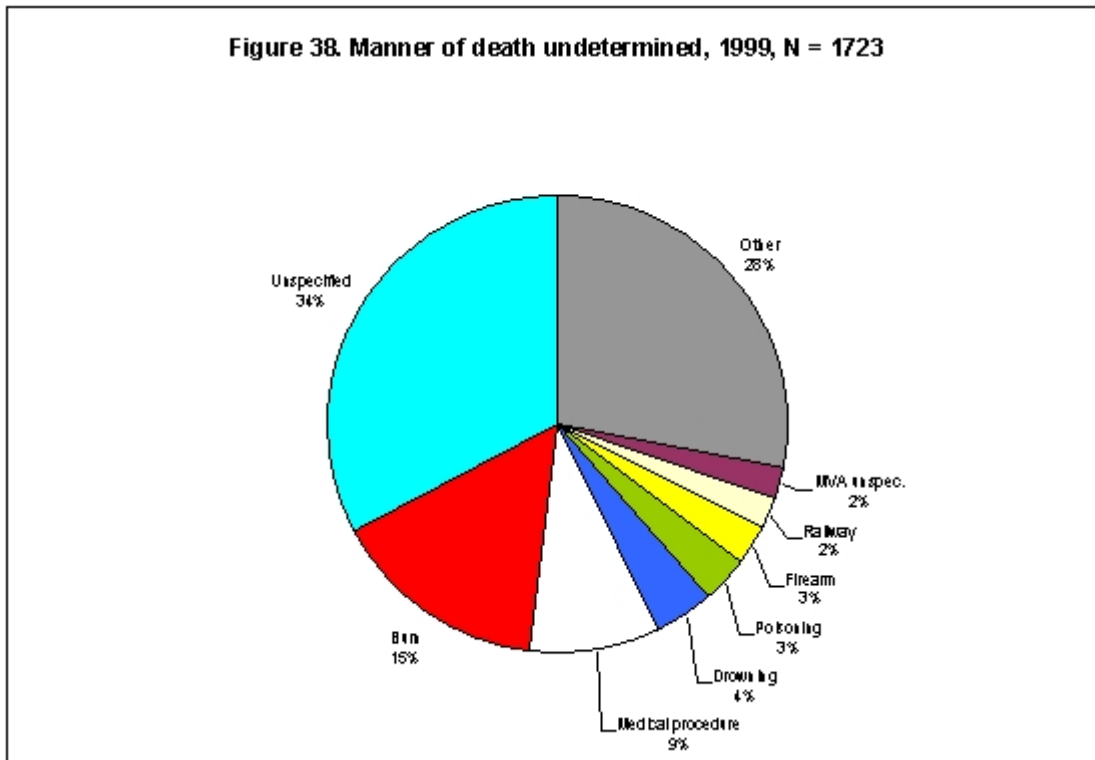


Figure 38 displays the external causes of death for the 1723 cases where manner of death was undetermined as to whether homicide, suicide or accident.

### 8.1 Undetermined manner of death by sex of victim

The distribution of external causes by sex of victim for cases where the manner of death was undetermined is shown in Table 19. The percentages of male deaths involving drowning, firearms and railway incidents were substantially higher than for females.

**Table 19. Undetermined manner of death by sex of victim, 1999**

	Male	Female	TOTAL
Other	338 (69.3)	150 (30.7)	488 (100)
Railway	34 (87.2)	5 (12.8)	39 (100)
Firearm	42 (87.5)	6 (12.5)	48 (100)
Poisoning	36 (60.0)	24 (40.0)	60 (100)
Drowning	64 (88.9)	8 (11.1)	72 (100)
Medical procedure	80 (51.9)	74 (48.1)	154 (100)
Burn	142 (55.5)	114 (44.5)	256 (100)
Unspecified	365 (68.0)	172 (32.0)	537 (100)

## 8.2 Undetermined manner of death by victim population group

Table 20 shows the distribution of deaths where manner was undetermined by victim population group. The proportion of burn deaths with manner undetermined was relatively high among Blacks and Coloureds, as was the percentage of undetermined drown deaths in Asians.

**Table 20. Manner of death undetermined by victim population group, 1999**

	Asian	Black	Coloured	White
Other	19 (38.8)	319 (29.0)	37 (14.4)	68 (29.1)
MVA unspec.	2 (4.1)	33 (3.0)	3 (1.2)	0 (0.0)
Railway	0 (0.0)	26 (2.4)	13 (5.1)	0 (0.0)
Firearm	4 (8.2)	31 (2.8)	6 (2.3)	7 (3.0)
Poisoning	2 (4.1)	39 (3.5)	7 (2.7)	12 (5.1)
Drowning	7 (14.3)	51 (4.6)	7 (2.7)	4 (1.7)
Medical procedure	4 (8.2)	36 (3.3)	27 (10.5)	87 (37.2)
Burn	3 (6.1)	204 (18.5)	47 (18.3)	4 (1.7)
Unspecified	8 (16.3)	361 (32.8)	110 (42.8)	52 (22.2)
TOTAL	49 (100)	1100 (100)	257 (100)	234 (100)

## 8.3 Undetermined manner of death by victim age

Figure 39 shows the tri-modal distribution of deaths where the manner was undetermined. There were concentrations of such deaths in the two youngest age groups, in the middle age ranges, and in the age group 65 and over.

