

Costs of Injuries

The Economic Costs of Injuries¹

Injuries account for more than 160,000 deaths each year and millions more people are injured each year and survive (WISQARS 2006). For many people, the injury causes temporary pain and inconvenience; for others, the injury leads to suffering, disability, chronic pain, and a profound change in life circumstances, including substantial financial consequences. The economic costs of injuries include the costs associated with medical treatment as well as lost productivity costs, including wages and accompanying fringe benefits and the ability to perform one's normal household responsibilities.

Keep in mind, the most severe costs of injury are those victims whose lives are destroyed or permanently damaged, the families that are traumatized and often torn apart by the loss of their loved one(s), and the communities that lose vital community members, and which often must help to support those who are left behind.

Defining The Problem¹

- Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death in the first four decades of life. Motor vehicle crashes account for the greatest number of these deaths (WISQARS 2006).
- In 2003 unintentional injuries killed more than 109,000 people of all ages (WISQARS 2006).
- Suicide took the lives of 31,484 people in 2003 (WISQARS 2006).
- In 2003, homicide claimed the lives of 17,732 Americans (WISQARS 2006).
- Unintentional falls are the leading cause of nonfatal injury-related emergency department (WISQARS 2006).
- One in six women and one in thirty-three men report experiencing an attempted or completed rape at some time in their lives

What are the Costs of Injuries?

Indian Health Service Contract Health Services²

- For IHS Contract Health Services (CHS) (1994-1997), the average cost of a CHS inpatient case for injuries and poisonings was \$11,305 and for an outpatient case was \$570. Outpatient claims outnumbered inpatient claims by a ratio of 6.4 to 1.

	Number of Cases	Cost per Case	Total Cost	Percent of Total CHS Expenses
Inpatient	11,408	11,305	128,974,031	17 %
Outpatient	72,664	570	41,460,028	16 %

U.S. Overall¹

- In 2000 alone, the 50 million injuries that required medical treatment will ultimately cost \$406 billion. This includes estimates of \$80.2 billion in medical care costs and \$326 billion in productivity losses
- Males accounted for approximately 70% (\$283 billion) of the total lifetime costs of injuries that occurred in 2000 (Finkelstein 2006).
- Persons aged 25 to 44 years represented 30% of the U.S. population and 40% (\$164 billion) of the total lifetime costs of injuries that occurred in 2000.
- Motor vehicle and fall injuries account for 22% (\$89 billion) and 20% (\$81 billion) of the total lifetime costs of injuries that occurred in 2000.

Cost benefits of an Injury Prevention Program

The key concept is that injuries are predictable and therefore preventable. Developing an Injury Prevention program can help define any injury trends and problems in your community, can identify risk factors, and minimize future injuries through prevention. Developing an Injury Prevention Program in your community decreases the long-term financial expenditure and prevents the heartache injuries can bring to individuals, families, friends and communities. The total cost of an Injury Prevention Program is minor compared to the extreme cost of every individual severe injury.

References

1. http://www.cdc.gov/NCIPC/factsheets/Cost_of_Injury.htm
2. Indian Health Service's Indian Health Focus: Injuries, 1998-1999, pg 74