
CAUSES OF DEATH IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

In 2005, the King County Medical Examiner's Office investigated 101 deaths of children and youth ages 19 years or younger, which represented 5% (101/1,945) of the total deaths investigated. Of these deaths, 35% (35/101) were natural, 16% (16/101) were accidents (non-traffic), 13% (13/101) were homicides, 25% (25/101) were traffic related, 8% (8/101) were suicides, and 4% (4/101) were classified as manner undermined. In addition to investigating childhood deaths, the King County Medical Examiner participates in Child Death Review, a process which discusses these deaths in detail and formulates prevention strategies.

Of the 35 natural deaths of children and youth investigated by the Medical Examiner, 63% (22/35) were of infants less than one year of age. Of these 22 infants who died of natural causes, 10 were due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

There were 16 children and youth whose deaths were classified as accidental, excluding traffic-related accidents. Another 25 children and youths died in traffic related accidents.

There were 13 homicides among children and youth. Of these 13 homicide victims, 10 were teenagers (13 - 19 years of age) and three were children under 12 years. Fifty-four percent (7/13) of the children and youth homicide victims died by firearms.

There were eight youth suicides, all between the ages of 13 and 19 years. Males comprised 88% (7/8) of the victims. Regarding the methods used to commit suicide by youth, four were by firearms, one was by hanging, two were by jumping and one was by drugs.

Twenty-five (25) children and youth (19 years and under) died in traffic-related accidents, of whom 18 (72%) were teenagers. There were five motor vehicle driver deaths and nine motor vehicle passenger deaths among teenagers. There were no teenager bicycle deaths in 2005. There were two teenage motorcycle driver deaths in 2005 and one teenage motorcycle passenger death. There was one teenage pedestrian death in 2005. Of the 19 children and youths who died in motor vehicles, six were known to be restrained, nine were found not to be wearing any restraint, and it was unknown or undeterminable if the remaining four were using seatbelts or any other restraint device.

The following tables list the causes of death among children and youth for all manners in three age groups: less than 1 year, 1-12 years and 13-19 years.

Graph 11-1 Causes of Death in Children & Youth / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

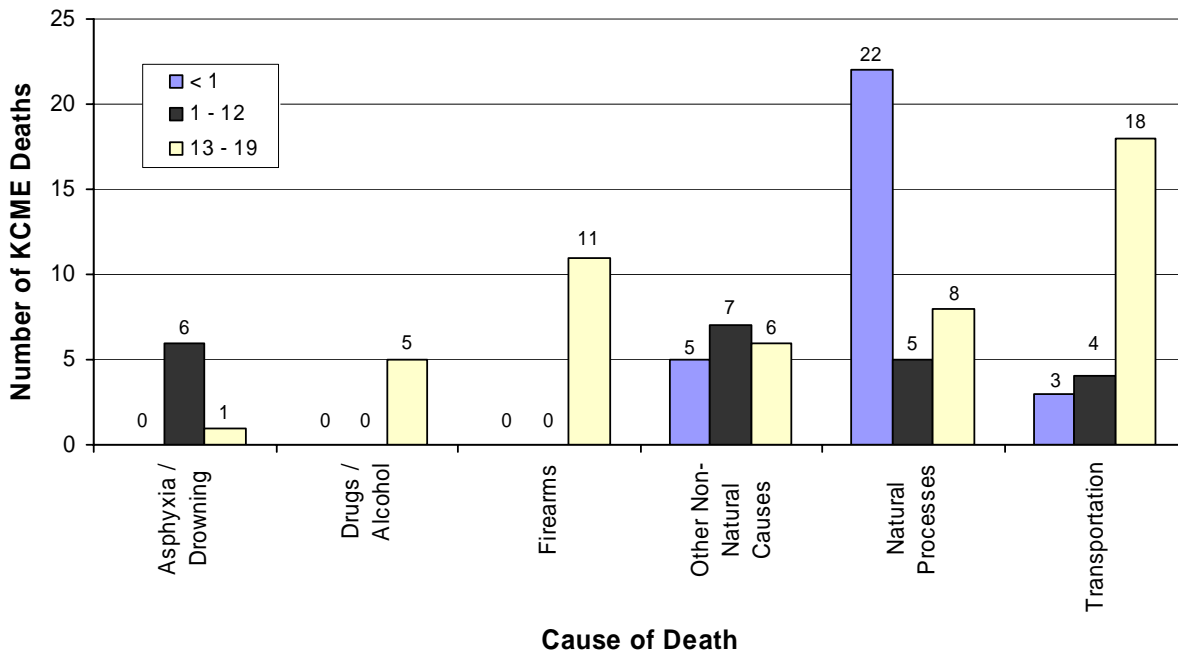


Table 11-1 Causes of Death: Children Under 1 Year of Age / KCME / 2005

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB	
	A	H	S	T	U	N	TOTAL	TOTAL
Miscellaneous	1	1	0	3	3	10		18
Asphyxia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Automobile Passenger	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	
Aspiration	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Blunt Force / Crushing	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Burns / Fire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drugs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Homicidal Violence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	
SIDS	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	
Other Natural Disease	0	0	0	0	0	12		12
Totals	1	1	0	3	3	22		30

Table 11-2 Causes of Death: Children 1 to 12 Years of Age / KCME / 2005

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB	
	A	H	S	T	U	N	TOTAL	TOTAL
Asphyxia	6	0	0	0	0	0		6
<i>Carbon Monoxide</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Drowning</i>	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	
<i>Hanging</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Mechanical</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Positional</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Miscellaneous	4	0	0	0	1	0		5
<i>Complication of Therapy</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Drugs</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Fire / Explosion</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Hyperthermia</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Jump</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Non Traffic -Vehicle</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Other</i>	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	
Physical Trauma	0	2	0	0	0	0		2
<i>Abuse</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Blunt Force / Crushing</i>	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Burns / Fire</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Firearms</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Incised / Stab Wound(s)</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Transportation Related	0	0	0	4	0	0		4
<i>Bicycle</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Motor Vehicle Passenger</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	
<i>Motorcycle</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Natural Disease	0	0	0	0	0	5		5
Totals	10	2	0	4	1	5		22

Table 11-3 Causes of Death: Children 13 to 19 Years of Age / KCME / 2005

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB	
	A	H	S	T	U	N	TOTAL	TOTAL
Asphyxia	0	0	1	0	0	0		1
<i>Drowning</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Hanging</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
<i>Smothering</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drugs / Alcohol	4	0	1	0	0	0		5
Miscellaneous	1	0	2	0	0	0		3
<i>Complication of Therapy</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Fall</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Jump</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	
<i>Non-Traffic Vehicular</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Physical Trauma	0	10	4	0	0	0		14
<i>Blunt Force / Crushing</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Firearms</i>	0	7	4	0	0	0	11	
<i>Homicidal Violence</i>	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Incised / Stab Wound(s)</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Strangulation</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Struck by Train</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Transportation Related	0	0	0	18	0	0		18
<i>Bicycle</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Motor Vehicle Driver</i>	0	0	0	5	0	0	5	
<i>Motor Vehicle Passenger</i>	0	0	0	9	0	0	9	
<i>Motorcycle</i>	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Natural disease	0	0	0	0	0	8		8
Totals	5	10	8	18	0	8		49