
CAUSES OF DEATH IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

In 2004, the King County Medical Examiner's Office investigated 114 deaths of children and youth ages 19 years or younger, which represented 6% (114/1,863) of the total deaths investigated. Of these deaths, 32% (37/114) were natural, 16% (18/114) were accidents, 16% (18/114) were homicides, 25% (28/114) were traffic related, 7% (8/114) were suicides, and 4% (4/114) 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 37 natural deaths of children and youth investigated by the Medical Examiner, 57% (21/37) were of infants less than one year of age. Of these 21 infants who died of natural causes, 11 were due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

There were 18 children and youth whose deaths were classified as accidental, excluding traffic-related accidents. Another 28 children and youths died in traffic related accidents.

There were 18 homicides among children and youth. Of these 18 homicide victims, 10 were teenagers (13 - 19 years of age) and eight were children under 12 years. Forty-four percent (8/18) 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 63% (5/8) of the victims. Regarding the methods used to commit suicide by youth, four were by firearms, three were by hanging, and one was by drugs.

Twenty-eight (28) children and youth (19 years and under) died in traffic-related accidents, of whom 22 (79%) were teenagers. There were three motor vehicle driver deaths and 18 motor vehicle passenger deaths among teenagers. One teenager died as the result of a bicycle accident in 2004. There was one teenage motorcycle driver death in 2004. There were no teenage pedestrian deaths in 2004. Of the 25 children and youths who died in motor vehicles, 14 were known to be restrained, eight were found not to be wearing any restraint, and it was unknown or undeterminable if the remaining three 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 / 2004

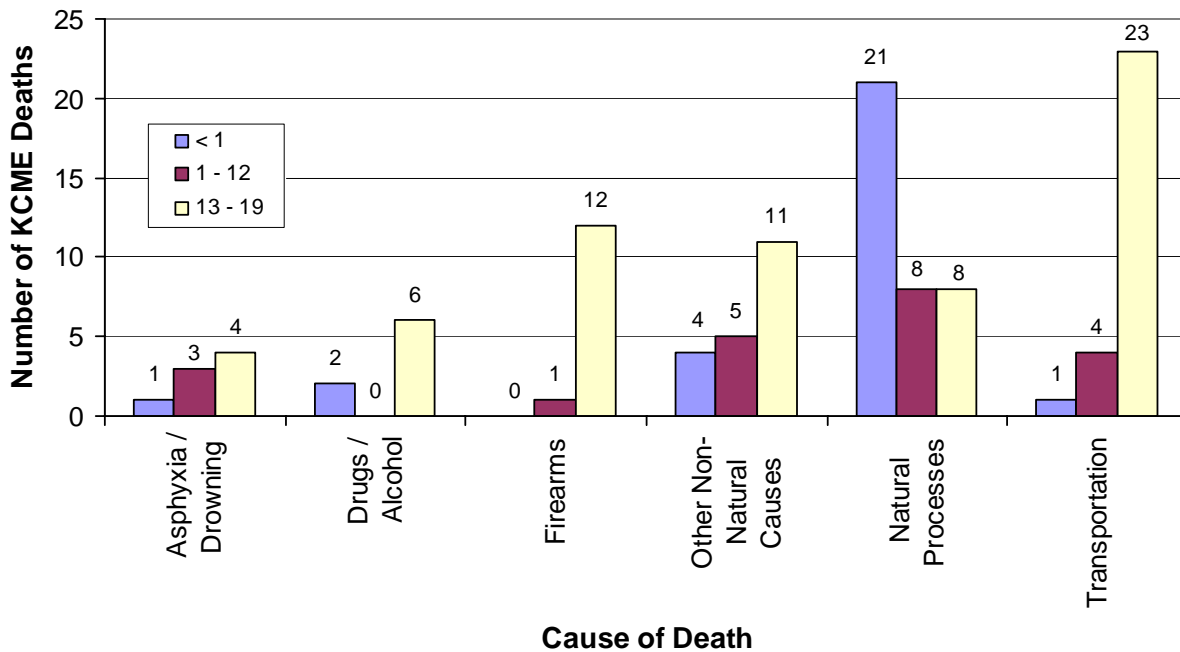


Table 11-1 Causes of Death: Children Under 1 Year of Age / KCME / 2004

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB	
	A	H	S	T	U	N	TOTAL	TOTAL
Miscellaneous	1	4	0	1	2	11		19
Asphyxia	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Automobile Passenger	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Aspiration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Blunt Force / Crushing	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	
Burn / Fire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drugs	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	
Homicidal Violence	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
SIDS	0	0	0	0	0	11	11	
Other Natural Disease	0	0	0	0	0	10		10
Totals	1	4	0	1	2	21		29

Table 11-2 Causes of Death: Children 1 to 12 Years of Age / KCME / 2004

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB	
	A	H	S	T	U	N	TOTAL	TOTAL
Asphyxia	3	0	0	0	0	0		3
<i>Carbon Monoxide</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Drowning</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Hanging</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Other</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Positional</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Miscellaneous	1	0	0	0	0	0		1
<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>Jump</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Non Traffic -Vehicle</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Physical Trauma	1	4	0	0	0	0		5
<i>Abuse</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Blunt Force / Crushing</i>	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Burn / Fire</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Firearm</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<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	3	0	0	3	
<i>Motorcycle</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Natural Disease	0	0	0	0	0	8		8
Totals	5	4	0	4	0	8		21

Table 11-3 Causes of Death: Children 13 to 19 Years of Age / KCME / 2004

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB	
	A	H	S	T	U	N	TOTAL	TOTAL
Asphyxia	1	0	3	0	0	0		4
<i>Drowning</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Hanging</i>	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	
<i>Smothering</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drugs / Alcohol	4	0	1	0	1	0		6
Miscellaneous	4	2	0	0	1	0		7
<i>Complication of Therapy</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Fall</i>	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	
<i>Jump</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Other</i>	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	
Physical Trauma	4	8	4	0	0	0		16
<i>Blunt Force / Crushing</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Firearms</i>	1	7	4	0	0	0	12	
<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>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Transportation Related	23	0	0	0	0	0		23
<i>Bicycle</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Motor Vehicle Driver</i>	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	
<i>Motor Vehicle Passenger</i>	18	0	0	0	0	0	18	
<i>Motorcycle</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Natural disease	0	0	0	0	0	8		8
Totals	36	10	8	0	2	8		64