Los Angeles County

1998 Population: 9,387,262

2007 Population: 10,332,322

Overview

Between 1998 and 2007, there were 39,751 injury deaths among LA County residents. 85% of the deaths were attributed to one of the five leading causes of injury death. Just over half of all injury deaths were caused by the two leading causes: firearms and motor vehicle traffic. For comparisons between LA County and individual SPAs, see the SPA Comparison Table.

LA County Injury Mortality Facts in Brief

- Firearm mortality decreased by 25% during the ten-year period.
- Homicide rates have decreased annually since 2002.
- Males accounted for 75% of injury deaths, but for 90% of firearm deaths.
- Over half of suicides were White and one-third of suicides were Black.
- MVT and firearm mortality rates peaked among 20-24 year olds.

Figure 1. Trends

- Between 1998 and 2007, the LA County population increased by 10.1%.

- There were no consistent trends over time in injury mortality in LA County during the ten-year period. Mortality rates peaked during 2002 and 2003, when mortality rates were over 43 per 100,000.

- Fall-related mortality generally increased during the ten-year period. The 2007 rate (4.5 per 100,000) was an increase of 21% over the 1998 rate (3.7 per 100,000).

- Firearm mortality rates decreased 25% between 1998 (12.6 per 100,000) and 2007 (9.4 per 100,000). Despite this substantial decrease, firearms were the leading cause of injury death during each year of the report period.

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1 The suffocation category also includes hanging and strangulation deaths and deaths from the inhalation of food or other objects that block breathing.
Table 1. Intent

- Between 1998 and 2007, 54% of injury deaths in LA County were unintentional, 18% were suicides, and 26% were homicides.

- Nearly all MVT deaths, 9 out of 10 fall deaths, and 8 out of 10 poisoning deaths were unintentional.

- Firearms were the leading cause of intentional injury mortality, accounting for 44% of suicides and 79% of homicides.

- Between 1998 and 2007, unintentional injury rates increased slightly during the report period; prior to 2002, rates were less than 23 per 100,000. Since 2002, mortality rates were over 23 per 100,000 except during 2005.

- Homicide rates peaked in 2002 (11.1 per 100,000) and have decreased each year since then.

- Suicide mortality generally decreased during the ten-year period. The 2007 rate (6.6 per 100,000) was 27% less than the 1998 rate of (9.0 per 100,000).

Table 2. Gender

- Males accounted for 75% of injury deaths in LA County, but for only 49% of the county’s population.

- Firearms (N=10,416) were the leading cause of injury death among males, followed by MVT (N=5,981).

- MVT (N=2,608) was the leading cause of injury death among females, followed by poisoning (N=2,241).

- Males accounted for over four-fifths of homicides (86%), over three-quarters of suicides (78%), and more than two-thirds of unintentional injury deaths (70%).

- Male mortality rates were over three times as high as female mortality during each year.

Figure 2. Race/Ethnicity

- Between 1998 and 2007, the population of LA County was 46% Latino, 32% White, 13% Asian/Other, and 10% Black.
During the same period, LA County residents who died from injuries were 37% Latino, 37% White, 8% Asian/Other, and 17% Black.

There was variation in the racial/ethnic distribution by intent:
- Unintentional: 35% Latino, 43% White, 8% Asian/Other, 13% Black
- Suicide: 23% Latino, 58% White, 11% Asian/Other, 8% Black
- Homicide: 51% Latino, 11% White, 5% Asian/Other, 33% Black

Racial/ethnic distribution also varied for different types of injuries:
- Whites accounted for 55% of falls, but just 23% of firearm deaths.
- Blacks accounted for 28% of firearm deaths, but just 8% of falls.
- Latinos accounted for 44% of firearm deaths, but just 25% of falls.
- Asian/Others accounted for 15% of suffocation deaths, but just 3% of poisonings.

Males accounted for 69% of deaths among Whites, 78% among Blacks, 68% among Asian/Others, and 82% among Latinos.

Mortality rates were highest among Blacks during each year of the report period. During each year, Black mortality rates were more than 50% higher than the mortality rates of any other racial/ethnic group.

Figure 3. Age

During the ten-year period, the number of injury deaths in LA County peaked among 19 and 21 year olds.

The leading cause of death varied by age group:
- Among 0-4 year olds, other (non-leading) causes of injury was the most common cause of injury death.
- Among 5-14 year olds, MVT was the leading cause of injury death.
- Among 15-34 year olds, firearms were the leading cause of injury death.
- Among 35-64 year olds, poisoning was the leading cause of injury death.
- Among 65+ year olds, falls were the leading cause of injury death.

Homicide was the leading intent of injury death among infants (<1 year old); among all other age groups, unintentional injuries were the most common.

Mortality rates from unintentional injuries (49.4 per 100,000) and suicides (14.1 per 100,000) peaked among 65+ year olds. Mortality rates from homicide peaked among 20-24 year olds (32.5 per 100,000).

Among 15-29 year olds, male mortality rates were over five times greater than female mortality rates. Among 20-24 year olds, male mortality was over six times that of females.
Among Whites and Asian/Others mortality peaked among 65+ year olds. Among Blacks and Latinos rates peaked among 20-24 year olds.

The average age of victims of injury deaths was 42.3 years.
- Victims of falls had the oldest average age at death (67.1 years).
- Homicide victims (29.5 years) had the youngest average age at death.
- Males (40.3 years) were on average younger than females (48.4 years) at death.

### Table 1: Number and Percent of Injury Deaths Attributed to Each Intent, by Leading Cause, Los Angeles County Residents, 1998-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leading Cause</th>
<th>Unintentional</th>
<th>Suicide</th>
<th>Homicide</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Falls</td>
<td>3215</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>3135</td>
<td>8105</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>11574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVT</td>
<td>8531</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8589</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poisoning</td>
<td>5757</td>
<td>1183</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>7186</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suffocation</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Causes</td>
<td>3462</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>6117</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Injury Deaths</td>
<td>21575</td>
<td>7174</td>
<td>10235</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>39751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 1: Age Adjusted Injury Mortality Rates by Year, LA County Residents, 1998-2007

![Graph showing age-adjusted injury mortality rates by year, LA County Residents, 1998-2007](image)
Table 2: Number of Deaths and Age Adjusted Mortality Rate by Gender and Leading Cause, and Gender Distribution for Each Cause, LA County Residents, 1998-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Num</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Num</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falls</td>
<td>2267</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
<td>1349</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<td>Firearms</td>
<td>10416</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>1158</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>MVT</td>
<td>5981</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>2608</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poisoning</td>
<td>4945</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>2241</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suffocation</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>729</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Causes</td>
<td>4436</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>1681</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>All Injury Deaths</td>
<td>29985</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>9766</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Los Angeles County Population and Leading Causes of Injury Death, Los Angeles County Residents, 1998-2007

Figure 3: Age Distribution of Injury Deaths Among LA County Residents, 1998-2007

The small number of deaths among 100+ year olds are not shown.

Sources: Death Statistical Master File, California Dept of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics; PEPS population data, Los Angeles County Office of Urban Research

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