
NTDB® data points

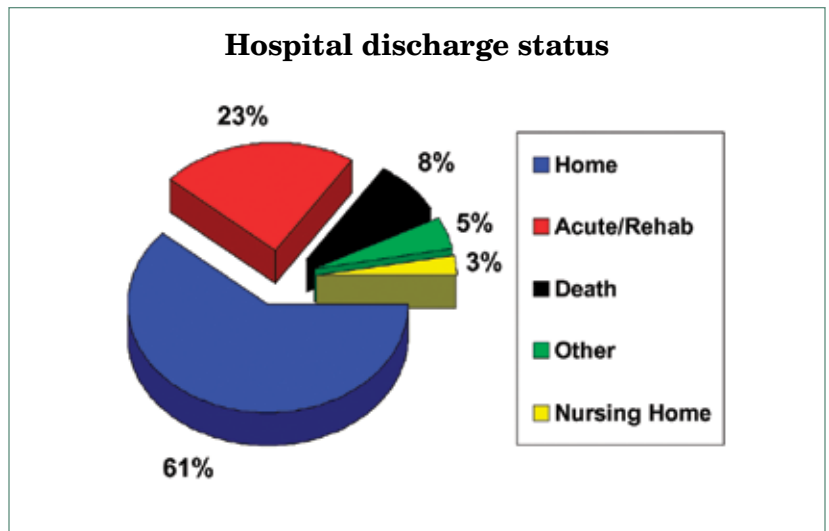
Come fly with me

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Many people compare medicine to the aviation industry when it comes to safety concerns. Both industries involve high-risk environments, highly trained teams, high regulation, and a hierarchal structure. Aviation has made significant strides in safety over the past two decades and, in doing so, has created a culture of safety. But how safe is aviation in reality?

Civil aviation is divided into the commercial and general aviation categories; it excludes military aviation. Commercial aviation includes all the airlines that many people are familiar with and use in daily life. There are more than 11 million departures each year. General aviation encompasses 96 percent of U.S. aircraft and 60 percent of all flight hours. This latter category also includes all the single-engine airplanes that most student pilots train in and ultimately fly after they earn their private pilot's license.

In 2004, there were close to 50 million hours of civilian flights and 621 million passengers. During this same time, there were 1,715 civil aviation accidents, including 556 general aviation fatalities and 79 commercial fatalities. In contrast, other transportation-related deaths in 2004 were as follows: automobiles, more than 42,000 deaths; railroads, 865 deaths; and boating, 830 deaths.



To examine the occurrence of these injuries in the National Trauma Data Bank® Dataset 5.0, we used cause of injury codes (E codes) for aircraft in transit/powering (E 841), for aircraft at landing (E 840), and due to/caused by cataclysm (E 908/909). There were 736 records for these E codes, with 451 being discharged to home, 168 sent to acute care/rehab, 22 sent to nursing homes, 35 other, and 60 deaths. These data are depicted in the figure on this page. This group of patients had an average length of hospital stay of 7.6 days, an intensive care unit length of stay of close to three days, and an average injury severity score of 13.7; the age group most largely represented among these patients was age

45 to 54 years. Similarly, the average age of private pilots is 46 whereas the average age of commercial pilots is 45.

Putting aviation in perspective by comparing it with other modes of travel, if someone were to ask you, "Come fly with me," you could go along and feel safe.

Throughout the year, we will be highlighting the work of the NTDB through brief monthly reports in the *Bulletin*. The full NTDB *Annual Report Version 5.0* is available on the ACS Web site as a PDF file and a PowerPoint presentation at <http://www.ntdb.org>.

If you are interested in submitting your trauma center's data, contact Melanie L. Neal, Manager, NTDB, at mneal@facs.org.