

NTDB® data points

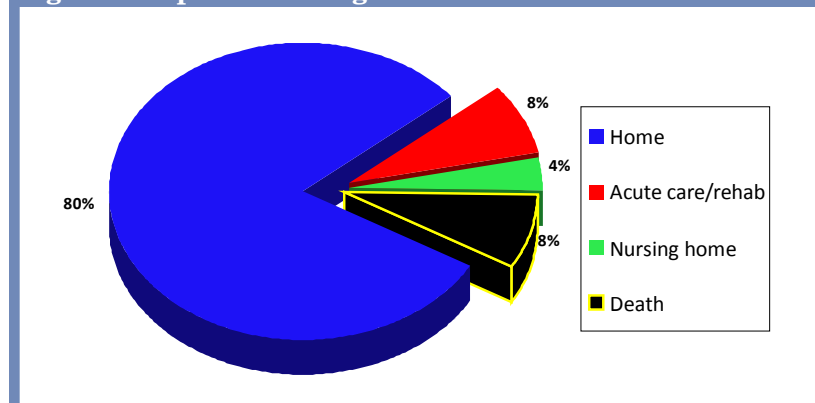
## Children are our future

by Richard J. Fantus, MD, FACS

This month is National Child Abuse Prevention month, a time to encourage individuals and communities to support children and families while raising awareness about child abuse and neglect. In 1974, the first federal child protection legislation, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, was enacted due to increasing public awareness of the need to ensure the welfare and safety of children. According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway Web site (<http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/preventionmonth/history.cfm>), Congress made a further commitment to identifying and implementing solutions to child abuse in the early 1980s by designating the week of June 6–12 as the National Child Abuse Prevention Week. In 1983, April was proclaimed the first National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Since then, child abuse and neglect awareness activities have been promoted across the country during April of each year.

Today, the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the federal agency responsible for providing child abuse prevention support for states, tribes, and communities throughout the country. The Office of Child Abuse and Neglect that resides within the Children's Bureau coordinates Child Abuse Pre-

Figure: Hospital discharge status



vention Month activities and provides national child abuse statistics each April. Additional information on this program is available at <http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/preventionmonth/>.

Child abuse knows no boundaries. It crosses all socioeconomic levels, all ethnic and cultural boundaries, and is found in families from all religious backgrounds and with all levels of education.

The statistics on child abuse and neglect are staggering. In 2007, approximately 5.8 million children were involved in 3.2 million child abuse reports and allegations, with an estimated annual cost of more than 100 billion dollars. Child abuse is reported every 10 seconds in this country. Close to five children die each day as a result of child abuse, with more than

75 percent of those younger than four years of age. Those who do survive are at greater risk for teen pregnancy, juvenile arrests, developing alcohol abuse or drug addiction, and almost one-third will later abuse their own children (<http://www.childhelp.org/resources/learning-center/statistics>).

In order to examine the occurrence of child abuse in the National Trauma Data Bank® research dataset 2008, admissions records were searched utilizing the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM) cause of injury code E967 (domestic abuse), E995.50 (child abuse, unspecified), E955.51 (child emotional/psychological abuse), E995.53 (child sexual abuse), E995.4 (child physical abuse), and E995.59 (other child abuse and neglect), with

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an age range less than 18 years of age. 2,739 incidents matched these E codes, 2,371 records had discharge status recorded, including 1,911 discharged to home, 181 to acute care/rehab, and 89 sent to nursing homes; 190 died (these data are depicted in the figure on page 43). These patients were 57.1 percent male, on average 14 months of age, had an average length of stay of 6.8 days, and an average injury severity score of 11.3.

Children should not grow up in fear. They should have a nurturing environment in which they can develop, learn, and thrive.

Linda Creed said it best in her lyrics for Whitney Houston's hit song, "Greatest Love of All": "I believe the children are our future."

Throughout the year, we will be highlighting these data through brief reports that will be found monthly in the *Bulletin*. The NTDB *Annual Report 2009* is available on the ACS Web site as a PDF file and a PowerPoint presentation at <http://www.ntdb.org>. In addition, information is available on our Web site regarding how to obtain NTDB data for more detailed study. If you are interested in submitting

your trauma center's data contact Melanie L. Neal, Manager, NTDB at [mneal@facs.org](mailto:mneal@facs.org).

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