

NTDB® data points

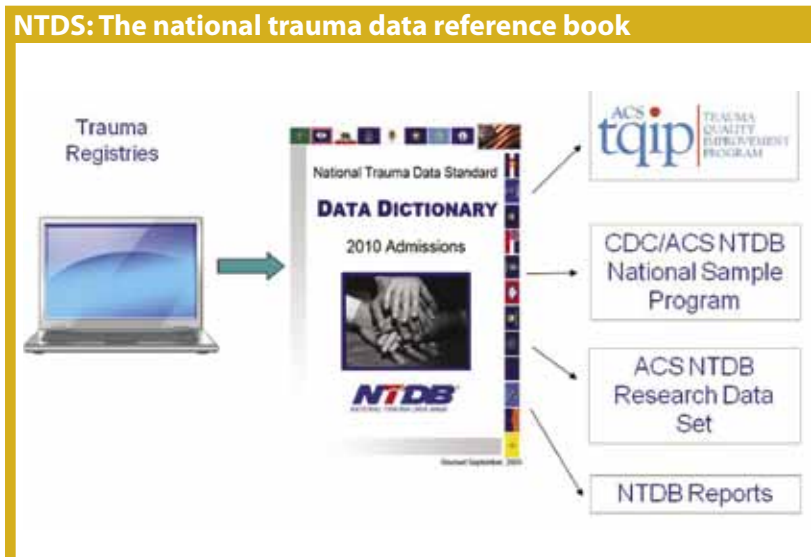
Another national chapter

by Richard J. Fantus, MD, FACS; Avery B. Nathens, MD, PhD, FACS; and John Fildes, MD, FACS

May is National Trauma Awareness Month. First established in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan, the goal of National Trauma Awareness Month is to heighten national attention on trauma and efforts to reduce the consequences of severe injury. The health care landscape has changed considerably since 1988, but trauma continues to be a major public health problem. Yearly, trauma accounts for 37 million emergency department visits, resulting in 2.6 million hospital admissions. Trauma injury is responsible for 31 percent of all life years lost in the U.S., which is more than the next two causes—cancer and heart disease—combined. The economic burden is more than \$400 billion a year, including both health care costs and lost productivity (http://www.nationaltraumainstitute.org/home/trauma_statistics.html).

Since the launch of the first trauma awareness month, there have been significant advances in the care of the injured patient and in the development of trauma centers, with an increasing number of trauma systems, as well as improvements in the aggregation and utilization of trauma data. With respect to trauma

[†]Fantus RJ, NTDB data points: Hasta la vista. *Bull Am Coll Surg.* 2008;93(9):59-60.



data, there have been several landmark advances. One of the first advances—dating back to the early 1990s—was the development of the National Trauma Data Bank® (NTDB), currently the largest aggregation of U.S. trauma registry data ever assembled. The most recent advances have been the development of the National Trauma Data Standard (NTDS) and the Trauma Quality Improvement Program (TQIP).

The NTDS is a data standard that has been previously reported in the September 2008 *Bulletin*, and refers to a new standardized data set that includes the definitions of

each data element, along with the computer programming specifications for each field.* The NTDS is designed to serve as the data infrastructure for all trauma data collection. As such, it describes all required data elements for the NTDB, along with other optional data elements that are not currently required by the NTDB. With cooperation from the trauma registry vendor community, the NTDS has allowed for a standardization of trauma data submission to the NTDB that in turn has significantly improved the overall data quality.

The improvement of data quality associated with imple-

mentation of NTDS has allowed the development of TQIP, a program that has, as its fundamental goal, the provision of risk-adjusted benchmarking of designated/verified trauma centers that will allow the tracking of outcomes and improvement in patient care. Using the NTDS, we have developed a new set of process-specific measures that allow us to understand how patients are cared for in trauma centers. While these process measures will be mandatory for TQIP centers, they will remain as optional elements for centers not participating in TQIP. This new chapter in the NTDS will allow centers to use these new fields for their own purposes, while assuring that they are collecting and interpreting data consistent with a national standard.

The NTDS is a fluid reference book that will be reviewed annually and modified to meet the needs of stakeholders. This book currently contains only a few chapters, as described

above, but has the capacity to grow and add new chapters as data sets come along. These new data sets will be housed as another national chapter of the NTDS, “the national trauma data reference book” (see figure on page 43).

Please refer to the following Web sites for more information on the NTDB (<http://www.facs.org/trauma/ntdb/index.html>), the NTDS (<http://www.ntdsdictionary.org/theNTDS/index.html>), and for TQIP (<http://www.ntdsdictionary.org/theNTDS/index.html>).

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.

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