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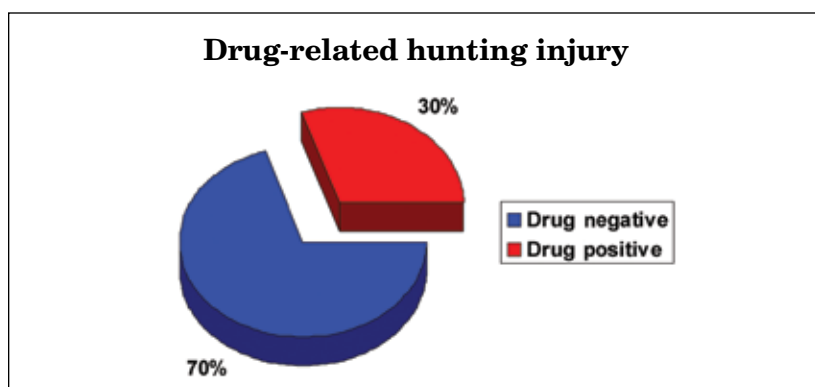
## NTDB™ data points

# A-hunting we will go

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According to the most recent National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 82 million U.S. residents aged 16 and older participated in wildlife-related recreation and spent more than \$108 billion enjoying their pastime during one year. Thirteen million hunters donned camouflage while spending more than \$20 billion, and each hunted an average of 18 days. Unfortunately, the animals are not the only ones injured in the process. One would expect that, with 13 million armed individuals wandering around the woods and streams of our great land, there would be a significant risk of unintentional injury from a fellow hunter. After all, the only thing separating the game from the hunters is their bright, blaze orange hat and/or vest, which are mandated by law in many states.

In order to examine the occurrence of these injuries in the National Trauma Data Bank™ *Annual Report 2004*, we used cause of injury codes (E codes) for place of injury E849.4 and E849.8, which relate to injuries occurring at a place for recreation and sport or other specified places (for example, a forest, lake, or mountain) and cross-referenced with E codes for cause of injury E922.1 and



E922.2 (shotgun and hunting rifle). Much to our surprise, there were only 485 records. These injuries resulted in an overall mortality rate of 4 percent, an average length of stay of seven days, an intensive care unit length of stay of just more than one day, and average charges close to \$31,000. Of those injured while hunting who were tested for drugs, almost one in three tested positive. Roaming the woods with a loaded gun should be a drug-free activity! These data are depicted in the figure on this page.

For drug-impaired hunters, even 400 square inches of blaze orange material may not be sufficient to separate the hunter from the hunted. Limited national statistics are available for hunting injuries but appear to demonstrate that hunting is relatively safe—that is, unless you are the 12-point buck in

the sights of the shotgun. The National Safety Council's annual statistical report on unintentional injury rated hunting with seven injuries per 100,000 participants, whereas football was rated at 2,740 injuries per 100,000 participants. Individuals who participate in this outdoor activity should be encouraged to shoot responsibly and be reminded to wear their blaze orange cap—and "a-hunting we will go."

Throughout the year, we will be highlighting these data through brief monthly reports in the *Bulletin*. The full NTDB *Annual Report Version 4.0* 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](mailto:mneal@facs.org).