
NTDB® data points

Horse sense

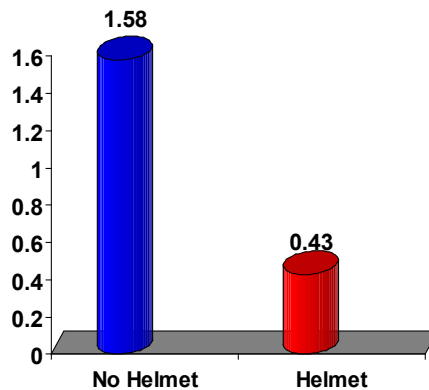
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Ancestors of the horse once roamed the earth with dinosaurs. Over millions of years, the animal evolved into the modern horse that can weigh close to 1,100 pounds and travel upwards of 40 miles per hour. History is full of the varied roles the horse has played in transportation, battle, industry, sport, and recreation. In the U.S., approximately 30 million people are involved in equestrian activities each year.* This synergistic relationship with equines is not without consequence, however.

Throughout time, many well-known figures have found their demise on the back of a horse. In 1227, Genghis Kahn died from a fall off a horse. Five centuries later, William III of England died from injuries sustained after his horse tripped on a molehill. Recent history reminds us of the late Christopher Reeve, the actor who suffered a severe neck injury during an equestrian sporting activity. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 200,000 people were treated for horseback riding injuries in 2004. Many of these

*According to the Web sites of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (www.aaos.org), the Children's Safety Network (www.childrenssafetynetwork.org), and the Hughston Sports Medicine Foundation (<http://www.hughstonfoundation.com>).

Mortality rate by helmet use in animal rider injuries



injuries were sprains, strains, and fractures, but there are several thousand brain injuries each year. Brain injuries account for 17 percent of significant equestrian injuries but are responsible for 60 percent of equestrian-related fatalities. The American Medical Equestrian Association Safe Riders Foundation (<http://www.amea-online.org>) refers to a reduction in head injury fatalities through the use of riding helmets.

To examine the occurrence of these injuries in the National Trauma Data Bank® Dataset 5.0, we used the cause of injury code (E code) E 828.2 for an accident involving the rider of an animal being ridden. There were 5,913 records that contain

animal riders that include all horseback riders. This group of patients were on average 37 years of age, and had an average length of stay of 4.1 days, an intensive care unit length of stay of slightly more than one day, and an average injury severity score of 9.6. There was a total of 88 deaths for an overall mortality of 1.5 percent. Helmets were worn by 469 and among those cases, two resulted in death (.43%) whereas the non-helmeted group accounted for 5,444 records and 86 deaths (1.58%). These data are depicted in the figure on this page.

With a fourfold greater mortality for the non-helmeted group, horse sense would tell us to wear a helmet when rid-

ing a moving object that puts us almost eight feet off the ground while traveling close to 40 miles per hour.

Throughout the year, we will be highlighting these data 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.

Trauma meetings calendar

The following continuing medical education courses in trauma are cosponsored by the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma and Regional Committees:

- **Advances in Trauma,**


December 8–9, Kansas City, MO.

- **Trauma and Critical Care—2007**, March 26–28, 2007, Las Vegas, NV.

Complete course information can be viewed online (as it


becomes available) through the American College of Surgeons Web site at: <http://www.facs.org/trauma/cme/traumtgs.html>, or contact the Trauma Office at 312/202-5342.

RESIDENCY ASSIST PAGE



American College of Surgeons

Division of Education



The Residency Assist Page of the American College of Surgeons offers a medium for program directors to acquire updates and advice on topics relevant to their needs as administrators and teachers.

Our goals are to offer practical information and approaches from summaries of published articles, invited editorials, and specific descriptions of lessons learned from program directors' successful and not-so-successful strategies. Through the development of the Residency Assist Page, the ACS intends to support program directors and faculty by providing succinctly presented information helpful in addressing the challenges associated with administering state-of-art residency education.

www.facs.org/education/rap

For additional information, please contact Linda Stewart, at lstewart@facs.org, or tel. 312/202-5354.