

NTDB® data points

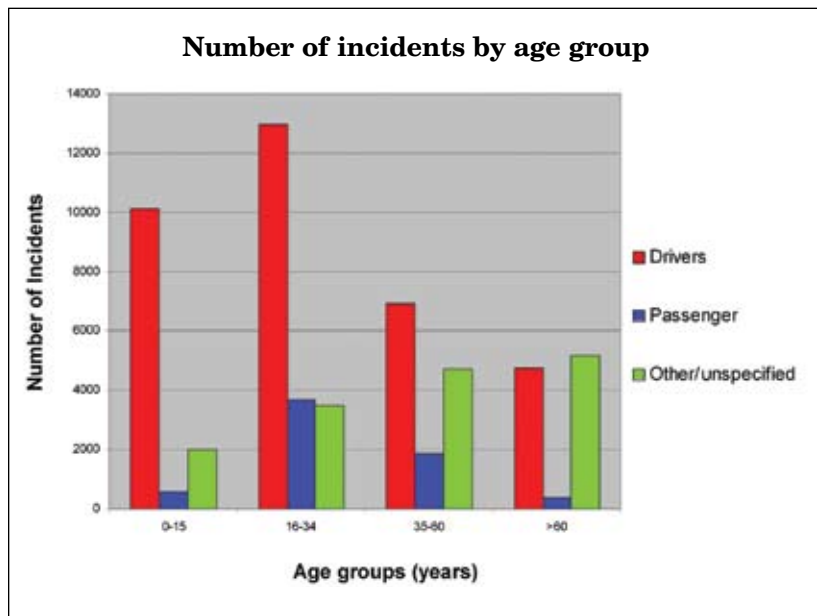
## ATVs: “All-terrain victims”

by Richard J. Fantus, MD, FACS

It is now the middle of fall, and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use is in full gear. It is not uncommon in the Midwest to hear of an ATV-related fatality on a regular basis this time of year. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the number of estimated injuries treated in the emergency room has almost tripled over the most recent 10-year period for which data are available, from 53,500 in 1996 to almost 150,000 in 2006. Along with this increased number of injuries has been an estimated threefold increase in deaths from 267 in 1996 to 870 in 2006. In 2006, deaths in children younger than 16 years of age accounted for approximately 20 percent of the fatalities (<http://www.atvsafety.gov/stats.html>).

The CPSC has stated that ATVs are one of the deadliest products under their jurisdiction. The agency has worked for 20 years trying to make ATVs safer. Aside from a decree in the 1980s to ban the sale of three-wheel models, there has been very little progress in recent years.

In order to examine the potential occurrence of injuries sustained while on an ATV, the National Trauma Data Bank® (NTDB) Dataset 7.1 records were searched using the International Classification of Dis-



eases, Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification cause of injury code E 821, accident involving off-road motor vehicles (which include ATVs), and further sorted to identify injury to driver, 821.0, or to passenger, 821.1. This search resulted in 58,235 records, composed of 35,665 drivers, 6,859 passengers, and 15,711 other/unspecified. These records were then divided to assess the ages of victims in these incidents. There was an increase in incidents among younger ATV users. These data are depicted in the graph on this page.

The Specialty Vehicle Institute of America points out that a vast majority of the ATV-related accidents and fatalities involve rider error. There is a chasm between the industry and the protection agency. There are some valuable precautions one can take in order to mitigate potential injury, such as keeping the vehicle off paved roads, avoiding tandem rides, wearing a helmet, not driving under the influence of alcohol, and not allowing children to operate adult-sized ATVs. To take it one step further, the American As-

sociation of Pediatrics suggests that no children younger than 16 years drive ATVs regardless of the model and whether an automobile driver's license is required to operate one.

We all make choices in life, and if one of yours puts you on the back of an ATV, be sure to heed the above so your ATV will not stand for "all-terrain victim."

The full NTDB *Annual Report*

*Version 7.0* is available on the ACS Web site as a PDF 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).

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