
NTDB® data points

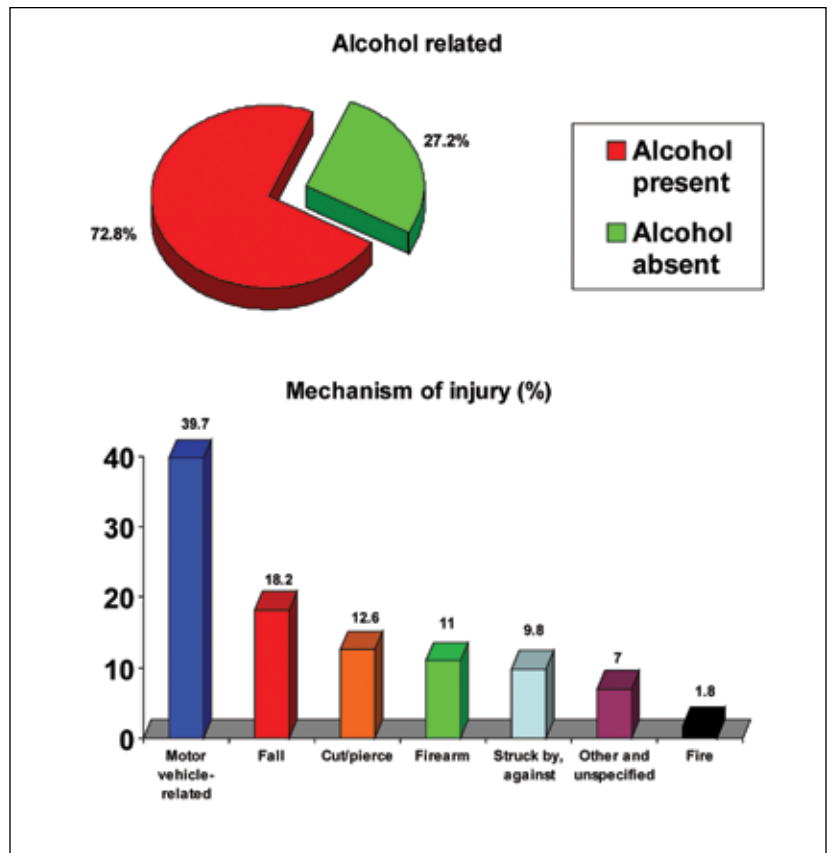
Ring in the new year

by Richard J. Fantus, MD, FACS

New Year's Eve is just around the corner, but it was not always commemorated at this time of the year. The beginning of the new year has been celebrated on different dates throughout history, but in 1752, Great Britain and its colonies in America adopted the Gregorian calendar and January 1 was permanently established as New Year's Day.

Throughout the world, the new year is celebrated differently according to various customs and religions. In the U.S., we have the "countdown" just before midnight in Times Square in New York. But tradition does not end when the ball hits the bottom. Bright and early this January 1 will mark the 119th Tournament of Roses parade, a tradition first staged in 1890 by the Valley Hunt Club in Pasadena, CA. Former residents of America's East and Midwest wanted to showcase their new locale's mild winter weather.

Yet another New Year's tradition is treating the intoxicated revelers who have managed to become New Year's statistics. Each year, numerous New Year's predictions are made, and though many never come to pass, there is one in particular that is unfortunately very reliable: According to the National Institute on Alcohol



Abuse and Alcoholism's 2006 *New Year, Old Myths, New Fatalities*, significantly more people are likely to die in alcohol-related traffic crashes on New Year's Eve than on any other mid-week winter evenings (<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/NewYearsFactSheet/NewYearsFactSheet.htm>).

In order to examine the occurrence of New Year's Eve-related injuries in the National Trauma Data Bank Dataset 6.2, I searched by emergency department arrival time between 7:00 pm on December 31 to 7:00 am on January 1. There were 2,219 records with discharge status recorded in the data-

set. Among the victims in these records, 1,831 were discharged to home, 250 to acute care/rehabilitation, and 41 to nursing homes; 97 died. Victims were 72 percent male, on average 33.6 years of age, and had an average length of stay of 5.3 days, an intensive care unit stay of 1.9 days, and an average injury severity score of 9.96. Of those tested for alcohol, almost three-fourths had alcohol present. These data, along with the mechanism of injury, are pictured on page 36.

Of note, although motor vehicle-related injury was the largest category similar to the overall 2006 report, penetrating injuries were more prevalent by two and one-half.

When you plan your New Year's Eve festivities, remember to advise your family and friends to party responsibly. Many cities offer free or inexpensive public transportation; another alternative is to identify a designated driver. After all, you do not want to be ringing in the

new year with an ambulance siren.

The full NTDB *Annual Report Version 6.0* 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.

Dr. Fantus is Chair of the ad hoc Trauma Registry Advisory Committee of the Committee on Trauma, Chicago, IL.

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