

Information on trauma-related injuries in New Zealand

This is a summary of the [trauma domain of the Atlas of Healthcare Variation](#).

The Atlas is an online tool showing differences in the type and quality of health care people receive in different district health board (DHB) regions. It is published by the Health Quality & Safety Commission.

The differences that show up are a good starting point for asking questions about why people get different treatment in different DHBs. When these questions are asked it can help DHBs improve their services.

We hope this Atlas domain will encourage you to ask about the availability of trauma data in your region and whether health services for people suffering trauma-related injuries in New Zealand need to improve.

About the trauma Atlas domain

The trauma Atlas domain shows how DHBs are treating people with major trauma-related injuries. It includes people who were treated in public hospitals but not those treated in private hospitals.

We chose this domain because it is important DHBs understand how trauma-related injuries are being managed across New Zealand so they can:

- see the big picture
- see how well they are performing
- make changes where needed to improve consistency and quality of, and access to, services.

For this domain, trauma-related injury is defined as physical trauma and does not include things like poisoning, hanging and drowning.

The information in this Atlas domain comes from hospitals with a trauma registry, as well as the Ministry of Health's hospital admission data.

About trauma

Injury is the leading cause of lost years of life in people under aged 45 years, mostly due to car crashes and falls.

Seriously injured people have the best chance of making a full recovery if New Zealand's trauma services perform well.

In 2012 the Ministry of Health and the Accident Compensation Corporation established the Major Trauma National Clinical Network. This network helps to ensure New Zealand health providers provide trauma services in a consistent way.

A national trauma database called the New Zealand Major Trauma Registry has also been developed and a minimum data set agreed – this means DHBs collect the same kind of information about trauma-related injuries.

What the Atlas shows

Here are some of the important things we know from the Atlas about trauma in New Zealand:

- According to Ministry of Health hospital admission data, on average there were 5.9 injuries for every 1000 people.
- Older people (aged 65 and over) had twice as many injuries as people aged 25–64.
- Older people were more likely than younger people to die in hospital after being admitted for trauma.
- According to trauma registry data, 70 percent of admissions for trauma were males.
- The number of hospital admissions or deaths did not vary significantly between DHBs.

How do trauma services in New Zealand compare with services in other countries?

We can't directly compare information about trauma services in New Zealand with information in other countries because we use a different definition of injury when we gather data.

We do know that, in 2012, the World Health Organization¹ reported 21.6 people out of 100,000 people in New Zealand died from an 'unintentional injury'. This death rate is lower than the United States of America (26.2/100,000 people) but higher than Australia (16.4/100,000), Canada (19.5/100,000) and the United Kingdom (14.6/100,000).

More information

About the trauma Atlas domain:

www.hqsc.govt.nz/atlas/trauma

About injury and mortality data by DHB (available on the University of Otago's website):

ipru3.otago.ac.nz/nigs/index.php

¹ Age-standardised death rate data from www.who.int/gho/en/.