



Admissions to hospital from farm injury

The Royal Perth Hospital Trauma Registry (RPH-TR) has collected and reported on injury data since August 1994. It contributes to a State Trauma Registry database, combining data from all Perth tertiary hospitals, SJoG Midland and Joondalup Health Campus.

Included on the RPH-TR are all trauma patients presenting to RPH for treatment within seven days of their injury and who were hospitalised for >24hrs, as well as all trauma-related deaths regardless of hospital length of stay.

Injuries are categorised into Minor (Injury Severity Score (ISS) < 13); Major (ISS > 12).

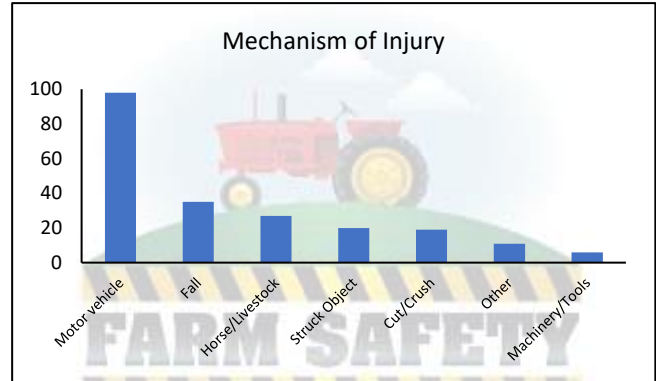
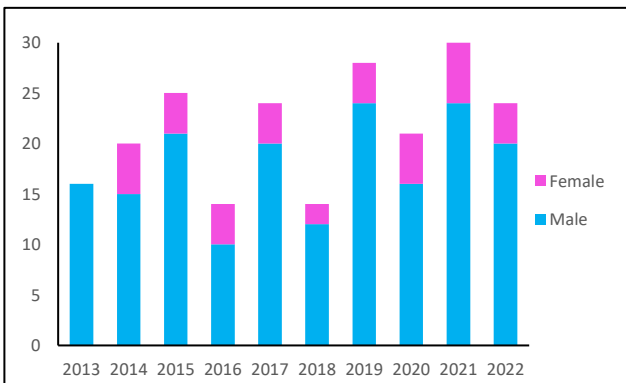
In Australia, from a health and safety perspective, farming is still one of the most dangerous occupations across the nation. The combination of hazards found in farming, and the extensive distances from help and first aid, add to the challenges faced by farming communities.

From 2013 to 2023, there were 216 farm injury cases admitted to RPH with major trauma injuries, of these:

- 178 (82.4%) were males,
- 38 (17.6%) were females.
- With an age range of 14 – 89, the 46 – 60 year age group were the highest.

All 216 patients sustained Major injuries with injury severity score (ISS) ranging from 13 – 66, the median was 22.5. Their average length of stay (LOS) was 12.2 days.

- The injuries sustained were diverse, from minor lacerations to major crush, spinal and head injuries.
- 171 (79.2%) farming injuries were from the country regions.
- 44 (20.4%) were from the metro area
- 84 (38.9) were work related
- 26 (12%) had documented consumption of alcohol and / or illicit drugs prior to the trauma event, however this is probably under reported.

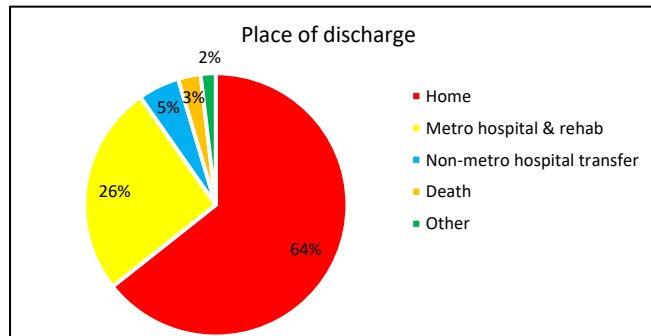


- Motorbikes, quadbikes and motor vehicles feature highly in the mechanisms of injury, in over 45% of farm injury admissions.
- Falls both from standing and from height account for 16.2%
- Injuries from working horses and livestock are also major hazards on the farm, accounting for 35 (12.5%) farm injury admissions..

Of the 216 cases:

- 39 (65.6%) patients were discharged home;
- 56 (26.4%) patients transferred to a metropolitan hospital and rehab for step-down care, the majority of the remainder required some form of follow-up care in a non-metropolitan facility.

Country-based patients who require long term rehabilitation face additional challenges of being able to access appropriate health professionals and services in remote and regional areas. Patients may need to stay in the metropolitan area until they have completed their rehabilitation, which places additional financial and emotional stress on them and their family.



Farmers are busy people who face enormous pressures and uncertainties. Improving health and safety on a farm can be viewed as an additional burden and cost. Furthermore, familiarity and complacency may be contributing factors to farm-related trauma incidents. Emphasis on the safe use of farming equipment, and farm safety generally, is required in order to help reduce the numbers injuries for both local workers and international visitors.