
NTDB™ data points

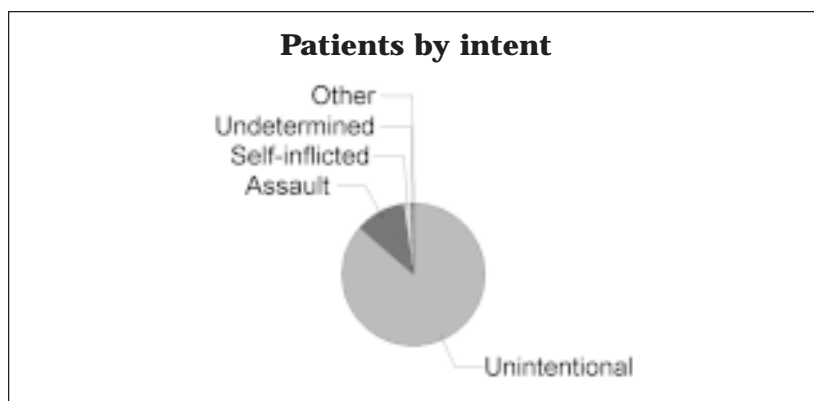
“I didn’t mean to”

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Anyone who has children is very familiar with the phrase, “I didn’t mean to.” Their statement implies that whatever they just did was an “accident.” How often, though, was this outcome predictable and, with proper supervision or advice, preventable? For years we have used the word “accident” when referring to motor vehicle related events. Using the word accident in all cases of motor vehicle related events as in the past implies that the event happened by chance or without an apparent cause. This concept further implies that the event or crash may not have been potentially preventable.

But after years of hearing the stories and seeing the results, it is obvious that many of these events are far from accidental. In the trauma vernacular of motor vehicle related events, we have gotten away from using the word accident. What once was called an MVA or motor vehicle accident has been changed to MVC (motor vehicle crash).

We previously reported in the January *Bulletin* that the National Trauma Data Bank™ (NTDB) began the transition to the use of the external cause of injury code (E-code) groupings that were developed by the international injury prevention community. E-codes define both the manner and the mechanism of the event. The manner relates



Proportional distribution of patients, grouped by intent defined in Appendix C. Total N = 453,806.

to the intent behind the injury (unintentional, suicide or self-inflicted, homicide or assault, intent not able to be determined, legal intervention, or act of war). The graph on this page displays the number of records contained in the *Annual Report* for 2003 that fall into the various intent categories. The mechanism, on the other hand, is what caused the injury: for example, a fall, a motor vehicle, a firearm, or one of several other mechanisms. There is an excellent two-page table in Appendix C that stratifies the E-codes by manner and mechanism.

The mission of the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma is “to improve the care of the injured through systematic efforts in prevention,

care, and rehabilitation.” By adopting this internationally accepted grouping of E-codes, researchers will gain insight into the cases that are contained in the NTDB. This insight will, in turn, allow for the initiation of prevention strategies and the ability to track progress through future reports of the NTDB.

Throughout the year we will be highlighting these data through brief monthly reports in the *Bulletin*. For a complete copy of the National Trauma Data Bank *Annual Report 2003*, visit us online at <http://www.facs.org/trauma/ntdbannualreport2003.pdf>. If you are interested in submitting your trauma center’s data, contact Melanie L. Neal, Manager, NTDB, via e-mail at mneal@facs.org.