
NTDB™ data points

One on every corner

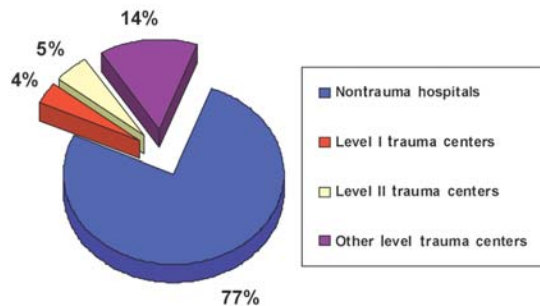
by Richard J. Fantus, MD, FACS, Chicago, IL, and John Fildes, MD, FACS, Las Vegas, NV

The events of 9/11 had a profound effect on all of our lives. We carry it with us each day as we go about our normal business. However, in our “business,” we have a greater obligation to be prepared in the event of another unthinkable act. How prepared are we? What are our local, regional, and national resources? How involved should we be with disaster preparedness?

The Committee on Trauma’s Subcommittee on Disaster and Mass Casualty Management has a statement, which can be found at <http://www.facs.org/trauma/disaster.html>, stating that the surgical community should have a major role in providing leadership, multidisciplinary planning, management, and triage relating to disasters involving physical trauma. They also recognize that the existing infrastructure of trauma centers and trauma systems are especially suited to handle the large casualty burdens following natural and man-made disasters.

What is the public’s perception of the trauma system and the importance of trauma centers? According to a recent Harris poll commissioned by the Committee on Trauma and the Coalition for American Trauma Care, the majority of Americans believe that having a trauma center nearby is equally important as, or more important than, having a fire department or police de-

U.S. trauma centers including NTDB contributors



partment. This public concept of a trauma center on every corner is far from reality. There are over 4,915 hospitals in the U.S. and, according to a 2002 national inventory of hospitals, there are only 190 Level I and 263 Level II trauma centers. Seven hundred additional hospitals provide some other level of trauma care. The *2004 Annual Report* of the National Trauma Data Bank™ contains data submitted from 405 of these U.S. trauma centers. These data are depicted in the graph on this page.

Our level of preparedness is not quite up to the public’s perception of a trauma center on every corner. We have a lot of work to do. Adequate funding is the only way to make progress. Each year a line item is included in the federal budget for trauma system development. This necessity gets funded at a little over

\$3 million—not a lot if you consider that there are 50 states, territories, and the District of Columbia. We need to work on funding in order to improve trauma systems development, which in turn will improve the infrastructure for disaster preparedness. We encourage you to participate in the College’s advocacy initiatives on Capitol Hill. It is both educational and rewarding to get involved in shaping our future.

Throughout the year, we will be highlighting these data through brief reports monthly in the *Bulletin*. The full NTDB *Report Version 4.0* is available on the ACS Web site as a PDF file 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.