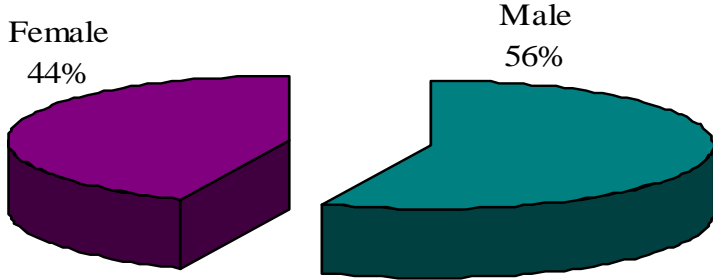


## Accidental Falls in Virginia, 2005-2006

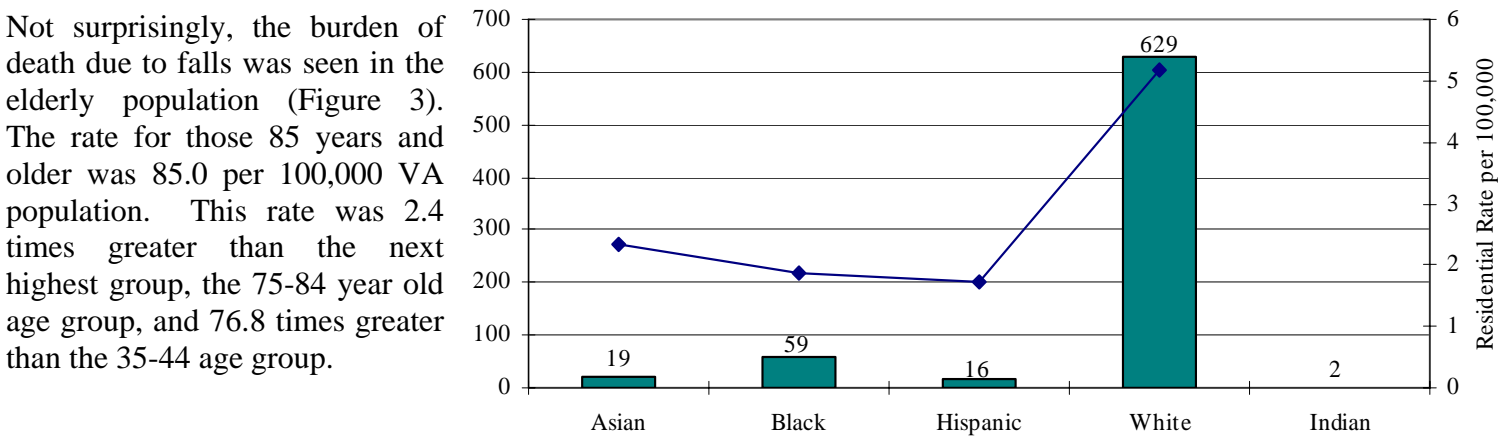
During the years of 2005 and 2006, 725 individuals died due to complications from an accidental fall with 93.8% of these deaths being Virginia residents for a rate of 4.8 deaths per 100,000 VA residents. Fall deaths accounted for 15.8% of all accidental deaths during 2005 and 2006 resulting in falls being the 3rd leading cause of accidental deaths in Virginia. Males had a higher percentage of deaths than females (Figure 1) and also a higher rate of 5.0 per 100,000 compared to 3.9 per 100,000.

**Figure 1. Accidental Falls by Gender**



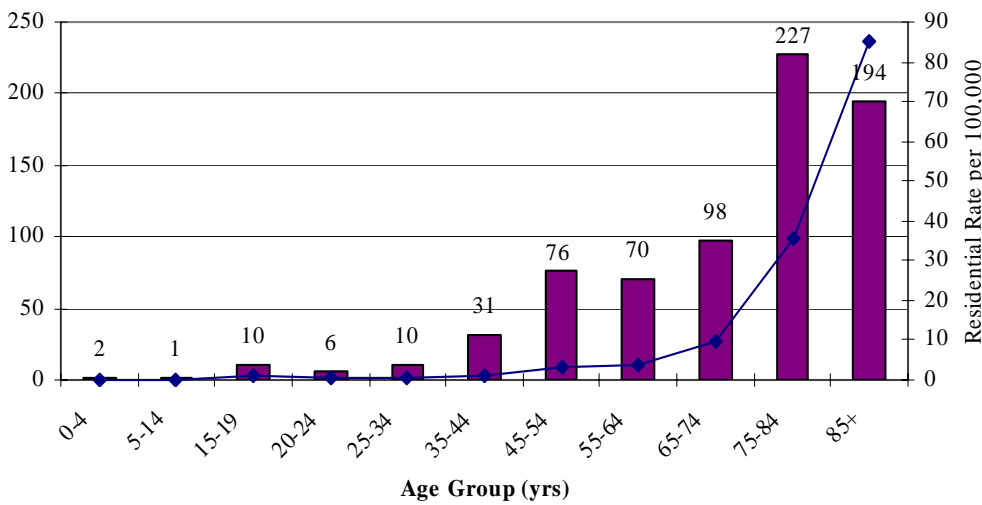
Whites had the highest percentage and rate for falls in Virginia (Figure 2). In fact, the rate of falls by whites was 2.2 times that of Asians, 2.8 times higher than Blacks, and 3.0 times that of Hispanics. No population data was available for the Indian race (Indian refers to the subcontinent India).

**Figure 2. Accidental Falls by Race/Ethnicity**



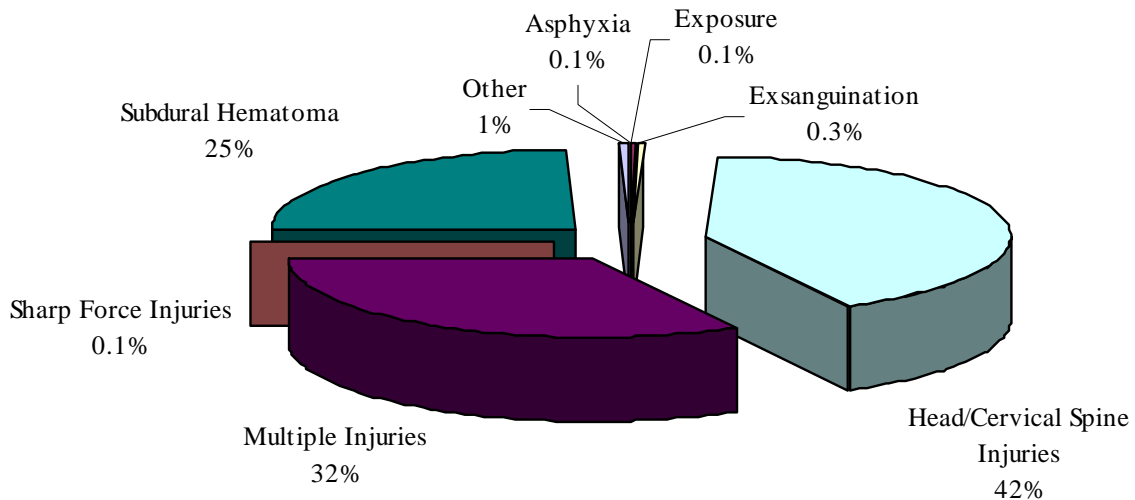
Not surprisingly, the burden of death due to falls was seen in the elderly population (Figure 3). The rate for those 85 years and older was 85.0 per 100,000 VA population. This rate was 2.4 times greater than the next highest group, the 75-84 year old age group, and 76.8 times greater than the 35-44 age group.

**Figure 3. Accidental Falls by Age Group**



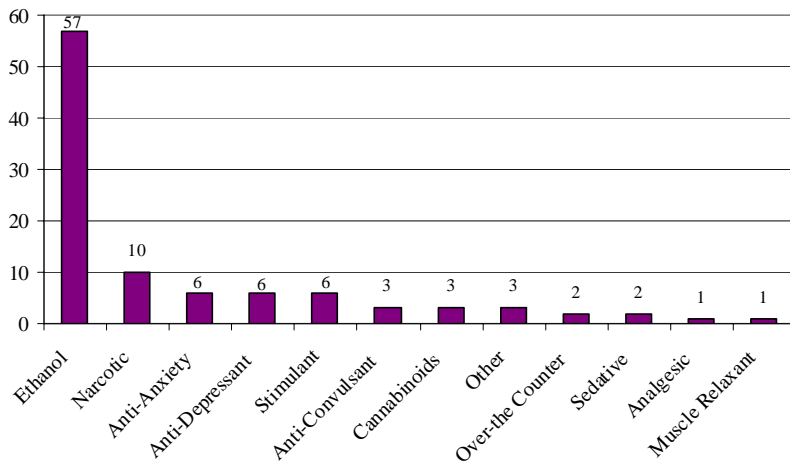
Deaths due to falls were partitioned into 3 broad categories of blunt injuries (head/cervical spine, subdural hematoma, and multiple injuries) and several specific causes (Figure 4). There was no correlation between cause of death and specific age groups.

**Figure 4. Accidental Falls by Cause of Death**



Of the 475 cases of accidental falls, 83 cases or 17.5% were associated with 1 or more drugs, with alcohol being predominant (Figure 5). Looking more closely at falls in which alcohol was present, 39 of the 57 cases with alcohol present had an alcohol level at or above the legal limit in Virginia (Table 1).

**Figure 5. Drug Classes Present in Decedents (N=83)**

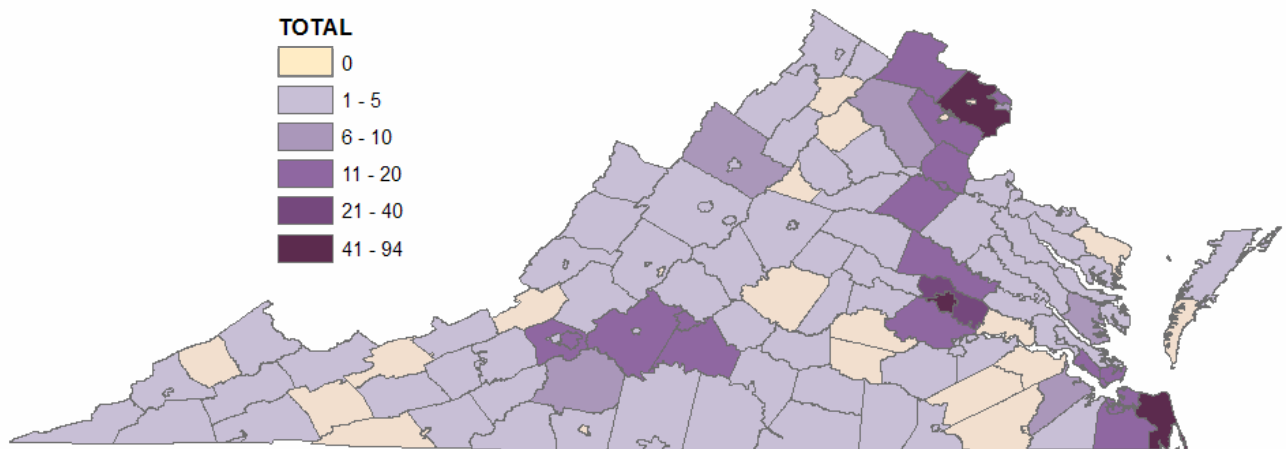


**Table 1. Alcohol Level in Decedents (N=725)**

Alcohol Level	Cases	Percent
None Present	668	92.1%
0.01-0.079 %W/V	18	2.5%
0.08+ %W/V	39	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>100%</b>

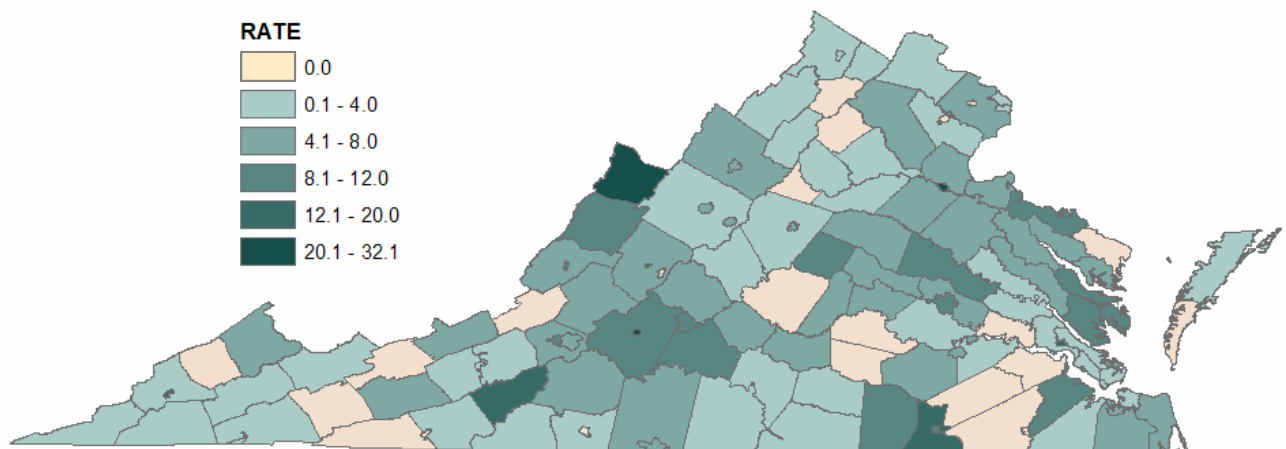
Most counties in Virginia had at least one death due to an accidental fall (Figure 6). The total numbers per county were dependent on the county's population, so a higher population equated to more deaths due to a fall.

**Figure 6. Total Accidental Falls by County/City**



However, the rates of accidental deaths by falls showed that some of the counties with the smallest populations had the highest rates (Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Rates of Accidental Falls by County/City**



For additional information, visit the following websites:

- <http://www.vahealth.org/civp/Topics/falls.asp>
- <http://www.vahealth.org/civp/HSLB/>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/adultfalls.htm>
- [http://www.aarp.org/health/staying\\_healthy/prevention/better\\_balance\\_prevents\\_falls.html](http://www.aarp.org/health/staying_healthy/prevention/better_balance_prevents_falls.html)
- <http://www.childrensnyp.org/mschony/P02972.html>