

VOIRS Data Notes

Crude Rates: Crude rates are calculated here by dividing the number of injury cases by the estimated population and multiplying the figure by 100,000. These rates are therefore expressed as “per 100,000 population”. Crude rates presented here are injury incidence rates, expressing the total number of new injury cases occurring in a specific period of time (in this case, a year) per unit of population. Crude rates have not been adjusted to address differences in the composition of the underlying populations. Caution should be used when comparing crude rates from different groups where the underlying population structures may be different. Differences in the crude rates between such populations may be due to the different population structures and not due to actual differences in the incidence of injury in these populations.

Age-Adjusted Rates: Age-adjusted rates presented here have been weighted to the U.S. 2000 Standard Population, according to guidance provided by the National Center for Health Statistics. Age-adjusted rates can more easily be compared between two groups, as the adjustment method addresses any differences in the underlying age structure of the populations represented. Age-adjusted rates presented here are weighted injury incidence rates, expressing the total number of new injury cases occurring in a specific period of time (in this case, a year) per unit of population, weighted to the U.S. 2000 Standard Population.

Aggregate Case Counts: When injury case counts in VOIRS are noted to be “aggregate”, they represent the total number of cases occurring over the exact years specified in the filter options. Aggregated case counts are used to calculate average annual rates. In cases where the absolute number of cases in a given year is small and therefore suppressed in the dashboard (noted as “<5”), aggregating these cases over a period of two or more years may provide enough data to determine an average rate over the period and give a better picture of the occurrence of rare causes of injury.

Average Annual Rates: When injury rates are noted to be “average annual rates”, they represent the rate of injury averaged across the exact years specified in the filter options. For any given year in the group of selected years, this will be the average rate of injury incidence.

Population Figures: Population figures presented in VOIRS are derived from the midyear Census estimates published annually by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

Explanation of Hospital Charge Variable: Summary values are presented for the hospital charges for injury cases, including total, average (mean) and median charge. Hospital charges differ from total costs for a particular injury, and the two figures should not be used in place of each other. Hospital charges only represent what was billed for the discharge and do not reflect what was actually paid or allow comparisons between injury hospitalizations occurring in different areas, as charges for otherwise similar injuries may differ between hospitals and between payers.

Median and Mean Length of Stay and Total Charges: For hospital charges and length of hospital stay, averages (means) and medians have been calculated to better capture the charges or length of stay for cases in the group. In general, averages are more readily affected by very high or very low values (outliers). Median values are more conservative estimates of the hospital charge or length of stay for any one case.