

# 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 and Joondalup Health Campus.

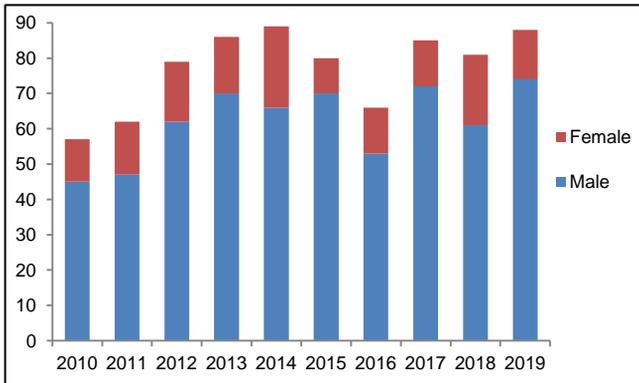
Included on the RPH-TR are all trauma patients presenting to RPH for treatment within seven days of their injury and who were hospitalised for >24hrs, as well as all trauma-related deaths regardless of hospital length of stay.

Injuries are categorised into Minor (Injury Severity Score (ISS) < 16); Major (ISS > 15).

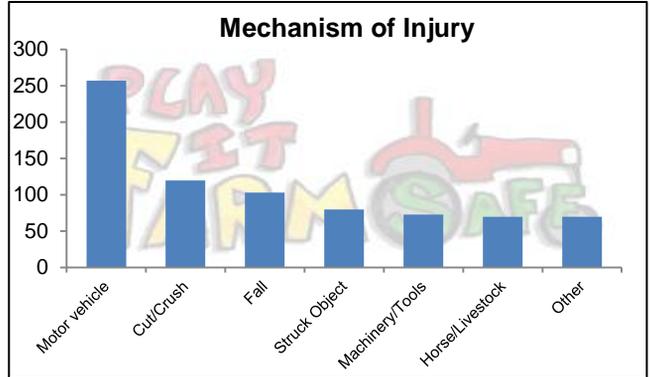
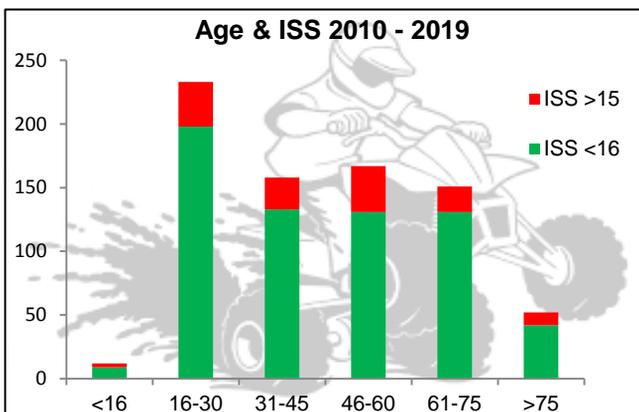
In Australia, from a health and safety perspective, farming is still one of the most dangerous occupations in Australia. The combination of hazards found in farming, and the tyranny of distance from help and first aid, compound the challenges faced by farming communities.

Of the 773 farm injury cases admitted to RPH from 2010 to 2019:

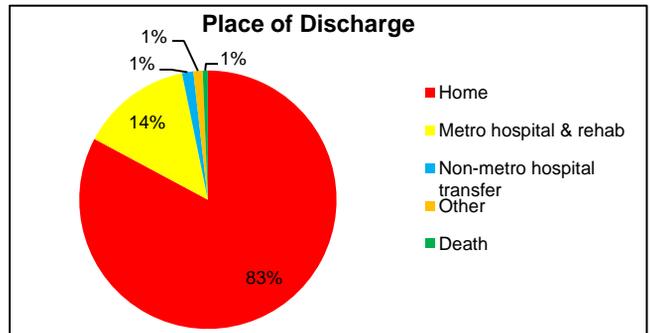
- 620 (80.2%) were males, 153 (19.8%) were females.



- The use/wearing of safety equipment may not be documented for every admission (helmets, seatbelts, appropriate footwear, eye protection etc.). Of the 469 cases that required safety equipment, 133 (28.4%) patients had documented use, however this is probably under reported.
- 53 (6.8%) had documented consumption of alcohol prior to the trauma event.
- The injuries sustained were diverse, from minor lacerations to major crush, spinal and head injuries.



- Motorbikes, quadbikes and heavy machinery feature highly in the mechanisms of injury, in over 53% of farm injury admissions.
- Injuries from working horses and livestock are also major hazards on the farm, accounting for 310 (40.1%) farm injury admissions. Falls increased to 17 (19.8%) in 2013 but have reduced to 13 (14.8%) in 2019 compared to 5 (8.8%) in 2010.
- 644 (83.3%) patients sustained Minor injuries with an injury severity score (ISS) <16. Their average length of stay (LOS) was 5.1 days.
- 129 (16.7%) patients sustained Major injuries, ISS >15. Their average LOS was 14.3 days



Of the 773 cases, 640 (82.8%) patients were discharged home; 11 (1.4%) patients transferred to a non-metropolitan hospital for step-down care, and the majority of the remainder required some form of follow-up care in a 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, and improving health and safety on a farm can be viewed as an additional burden and cost. In addition, 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 of farm workers, including international visitors, being injured.