

# Dog bite related admissions to Royal Perth Hospital

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); and Major (ISS >15)

From 2010 to 2019, 1450 patients were admitted to RPH with injuries related to dog bites. Numbers have continued to rise from an average of 6.9 admissions per month in 2010 to 20.8 in 2019.

Of the 1450 patients that were admitted to RPH from dog bite related injuries from 2010 to 2019:

787 (54.3%) were males, 663 (45.7%) were females

398 (27.4%) were 16-30 year olds, who appear to be most at risk, with 384 46-60 year olds(26.5%) a close second

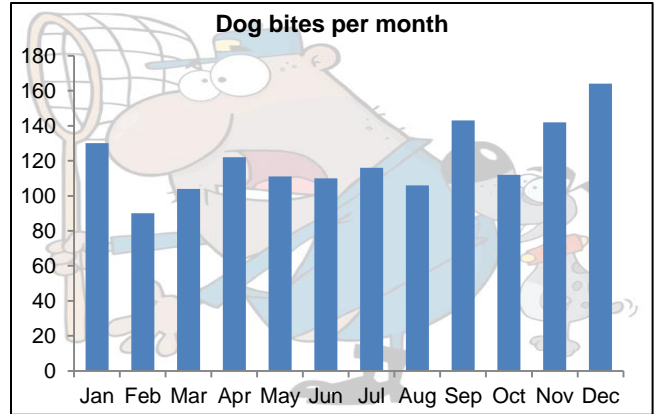
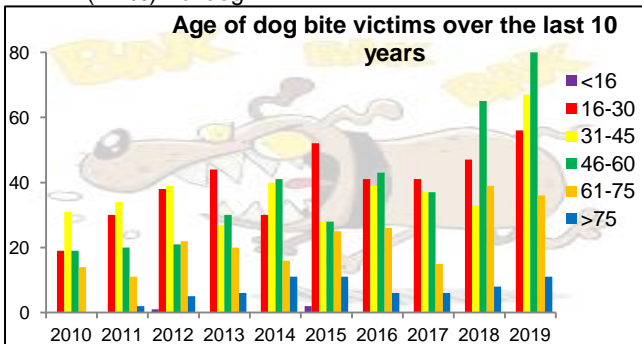
- 1281 (88.3%) injuries occurred in the metropolitan area
- 161 (11.1%) in the regional areas
- 8 (0.6%) were other or unknown

The time of year of dog bites is noted to slightly increase in the warmer months:

- 397 (27.4%) Spring
- 384 (26.5%) Summer
- 337 (23.2%) Autumn
- 332 (22.9%) Winter

There were only 5 breeds of dogs documented:

- 80 (82.5%) Pitbull, Terrier or Rottweiler
- 10 (10.3%) German Shepherd
- 7 (7.2%) Bulldog

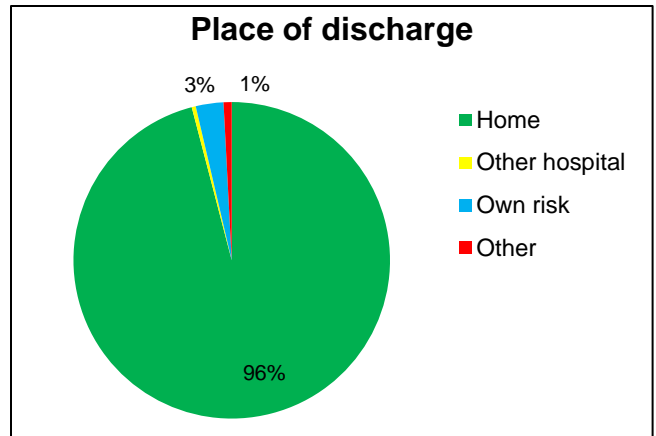


Where documented, the majority of bites were from the owners' own dog, often when splitting up a dog fight:

- 318 (66.1%) own dog
- 85(17.7%) friend's dog
- 50 (10.4%) neighbour's dog
- 28 (5.8%) police dog
- 104 (7.2%) involved drugs and/or alcohol

From 2010 – 2019 all of the patients sustained minor injuries, with an ISS <16. With a maximum length of stay (LOS) of 41 days, the median LOS was 2 days.

- 1390 (95.9%) were discharged home



Over the 10 year period, injury from dog bites has increased. The warmer months appear to be when dogs are more prone to bite. The physical injuries sustained are diverse, from bruising, puncture wounds, lacerations, nerve and muscle damage. There is also the psychological and emotional trauma from scarring and disfigurement, and the attack itself. Dog owners also need to be more aware of their dog's behaviour and practice responsible dog ownership.