

## Section 11

# INJURIES

### 11.1 Craniofacial injuries reported from emergency rooms

Craniofacial injuries frequently result in emergency room visits. Because time from injury to treatment plays a critical role in determining the clinical outcome (Dale, 2000), it is crucial that emergency medical personnel recognize the symptoms of such injury and administer appropriate treatment promptly. For instance, if an emergency room patient presents with a swollen face or difficulty in opening the mouth, it is important for personnel to administer surgical and/or antibiotic therapy to prevent severe complications or even death (Flynn, 2000).

Craniofacial injuries often disproportionately affect young people and are a common pediatric emergency (Nelson & Shusterman, 1997). One recent study (Wilson et al., 1997) of the causes of dental trauma in young people revealed that falls caused 63% of injuries, followed by being struck (17%) and motor vehicle crashes (2%). Injuries to soft tissues included lacerations, swelling, abrasions, and contusions, and injuries to the hard dental structures included tooth fractures, luxations, concussions, avulsions, and jaw fractures. Another study found that for 80% of the children under 3.5 years old who went to the emergency room for dental trauma, it was their first contact with a dentist (Lombardi et al., 1998). Similarly, a prospective study found that almost 69% of hospital dental emergency patients, children and adults, did not see a dentist regularly (Gibson et al., 1993a) and had still not done so one year later (Gibson et al., 1993b). In 1999, 11.3% of the emergency room visits in the NHAMCS data set were due to craniofacial injuries.

#### SOURCE OF DATA

The analyses reported here are based on the 1999 National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS), National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The analyses are unweighted.

#### ■ Among persons visiting an emergency room (Figure 11.1.1)

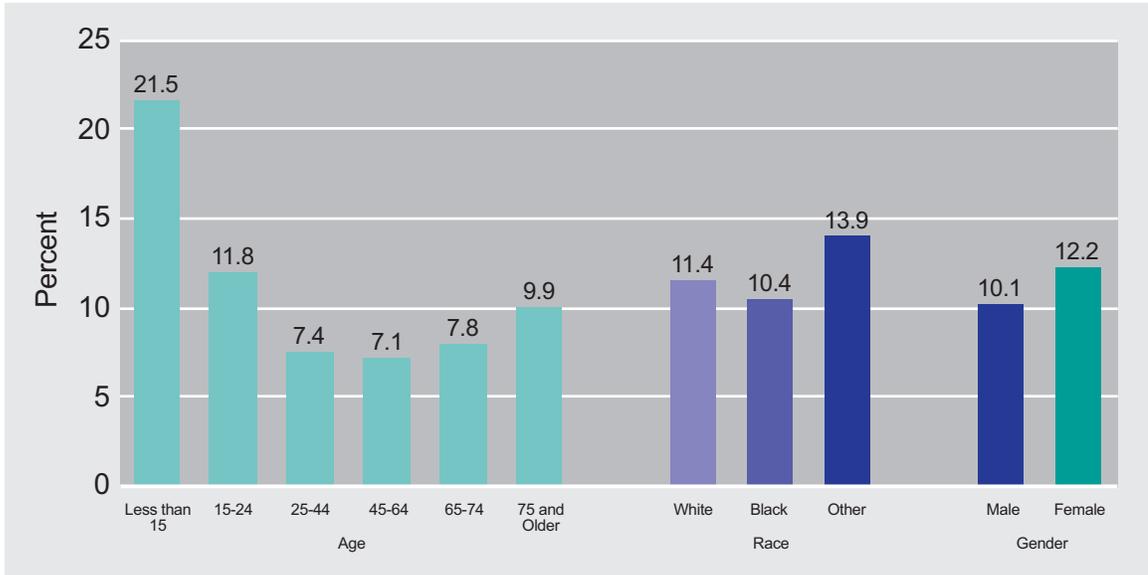
- A greater percentage of people aged 24 years and younger and aged 75 years and older had a craniofacial injury compared to 25- to 74-year-olds.
- The percentages of whites and blacks with craniofacial injuries were similar.
- A greater percentage of females than males had a craniofacial injury.

*Bullets reference data that can be found in Table 11.1.1.*

#### REFERENCES

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**Figure 11.1.1. Craniofacial injuries among emergency room visits by selected demographic characteristics**



Data source: 1999 National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.