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Some 309,000 head injuries treated in ERs

Some 309,000 head injuries were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms in 2005, and 64,500 were bicycling-related head injuries, a report says.

Between 1984 and 1988 an average of 962 deaths resulted annually from bicycling-related injuries, while traumatic brain injury caused 62 percent of all deaths resulting from bicycle accidents, according to the American Association of Neurological Surgeons.

Forty percent of deaths occurred in children age 15 and younger. Children are at the greatest risk of sustaining these injuries, but boys age 10 to 14 are at the highest risk.

"Bicycle helmets provide measurable protection in terms of both reducing the deceleration experienced by a person's head and protecting against direct compressive force," stated Dr. Arthur Day, vice president and director of the Cerebrovascular Center and Neurologic Sports Injury Center at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. "Yet too many children and adults take unnecessary risks and do not wear helmets."