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Spinal Injury Surveillance in New York

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Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) is relatively rare in New York, with about 550 cases being identified annually by ICD-9 code. However the impact of SCI on the individual and those close to them, and the cost to the health care delivery system of acute, rehabilitation and long term care can be very large.

Each year, a core electronic data set of hospitalization and death data obtained from SPARCS, Vital Statistics and Multiple Cause-of-Death files is submitted to the CDC. This core TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury)/SCI data system captures case-level information on the demographic variables, causes, diagnoses, financial cost and severity associated with TBI and SCI. In order to gain additional information on the circumstances, risk factors, severity and outcomes associated with SCI, a medical record review of all SCI hospitalizations is carried out. Abstracted information is linked with case-level hospitalization data and submitted annually to the CDC for use in their multi-state Central Nervous System Injury Surveillance System.

This comprehensive data system is analyzed for trends in SCI hospitalizations and deaths, leading causes and diagnoses, age, gender, race, ethnicity, hospital cost, length of hospital stay, hospital discharge disposition, co-morbidity, and other epidemiological variables of interest. The results are shared with bureau staff, local and state DOH staff, and relevant stakeholders. The information is used to track incidence trends, identify populations at-risk, guide injury prevention planning and programming, identify service needs within the community and evaluate the efficacy of existing prevention programs.