

# Quad bikes a major source of trauma in Victoria

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The significant trauma associated with quad bikes in Victoria has been highlighted in a University of Sydney co-authored study published in the *Medical Journal of Australia* today.

Conducted by researchers from the University of Sydney's Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety and the Monash Injury Research Institute, the study reviewed quad bike [injury deaths](#), hospital admissions and Emergency Department presentations in Victoria over a nine year period through to June 2011.

Over this period there were 19 fatal incidents, with approximately 800 hospital admissions and an additional 800 [emergency department](#) presentations.

"This review clearly identifies the extent of deaths and injuries associated with these vehicles," said co-author Associate Professor Tony Lower.

"We also believe that this is an underestimate of the true numbers as the Emergency Department records represent only the 38 hospitals across Victoria that have Emergency Departments operating on a 24 hour basis.

"Over half the deaths involved on-farm use of quads, with trunk and head/neck/face injuries accounting for most cases.

"Collisions with [stationary objects](#) (42 per cent) followed by rollovers

(32 per cent) were the most common causes of death. While almost half the deaths involved individuals aged over 45 years, children also featured in 16 per cent of cases."

Falls from [quad bikes](#) were the most common cause of both [hospital admissions](#) and presentations to Emergency Departments, with fractures accounting for half of all admissions.

Disturbingly children make up 20 per cent of admitted cases and 32 per cent of Emergency Department presentations.

An internationally-recognised standard that measures threat to life was also used to assess the severity of injury and indicated that 29 per cent of admitted cases were 'serious.'

A further analysis revealed that quad bike cases were statistically more likely to be a threat to life than other injured [motorcycle riders](#). Additionally, it was noted that there was a 41 per cent increase in admitted cases over the period.

Associate Professor Lower said: "As the data indicates not only are there increasing numbers of quad cases, they are also more serious than other similar injuries. Further, because of their threat to life, they will frequently require higher levels of medical treatment and longer recovery periods for the victims.

"The impact of deaths and serious injuries from quad bikes is significant and I am sure everyone would like to see a decrease in these incidents.

"Recommendations to reduce deaths and injury start with selecting the safest vehicle for the task being undertaken and in the vast majority of cases this will not be a quad. However, if a quad bike is still to be used and given the frequency of rollover incidents, then a suitably tested crush

protection device should be fitted.

"This is an increasingly common approach for many farmers and businesses that use quads and recognises their inherent instability and the danger posed by rollovers. Keeping children off quads of any size, not carrying passengers, staying within load limits, training and wearing a helmet are also important preventive actions."

The paper from the [Medical Journal of Australia](#) is available as an Open Access document and can be downloaded here.

Additionally, a range of quad bike safety information is available from the [Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety](#) or call 02 6752 8210 for further information.

Provided by University of Sydney

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