

Epidemiology of Consumer Product Related Injuries

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“Pools More Dangerous than Guns”

Chicago Sun Times, July 28, 2001

Steven D. Levitt, Ph.D.
Alvin H. Baum Professor of Economics,
University of Chicago

“What’s more dangerous: a swimming pool or a gun? When it comes to children, there is no comparison: A swimming pool is almost 100 times more deadly.”

S. Levitt, Chicago Sun Times, July 28 2001

Pools (1997):

- ~550 deaths to children under 10 in residential pools
- ~6,000,000 pools

Guns (1998):

- ~100 deaths to children under 10
- ~200,000,000 guns



Product Risk may not be obvious

Useful to consult data

Several large injury/fatality databases exist

- The National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS): NEISS is comprised of a sample of hospitals that are statistically representative of hospital emergency rooms nationwide. From the data collected, estimates can be made of the numbers of injuries associated with consumer products and treated in hospital emergency departments. Data is collected on a broad range of injury-related issues covering hundreds of product categories and provides national estimates of the number and severity of product-related injuries.
- Death Certificate File: State health departments provide these death certificate files to CPSC where consumer products are found to be involved in the deaths. The Clearinghouse provides summaries of the death certificates with victim information removed.

U.S. Code Title 15 - Commerce and Trade
Chapter 47 – Consumer Product Safety
Section 2052 - Definitions

http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode15/usc_sec_15_00002052----000-.html

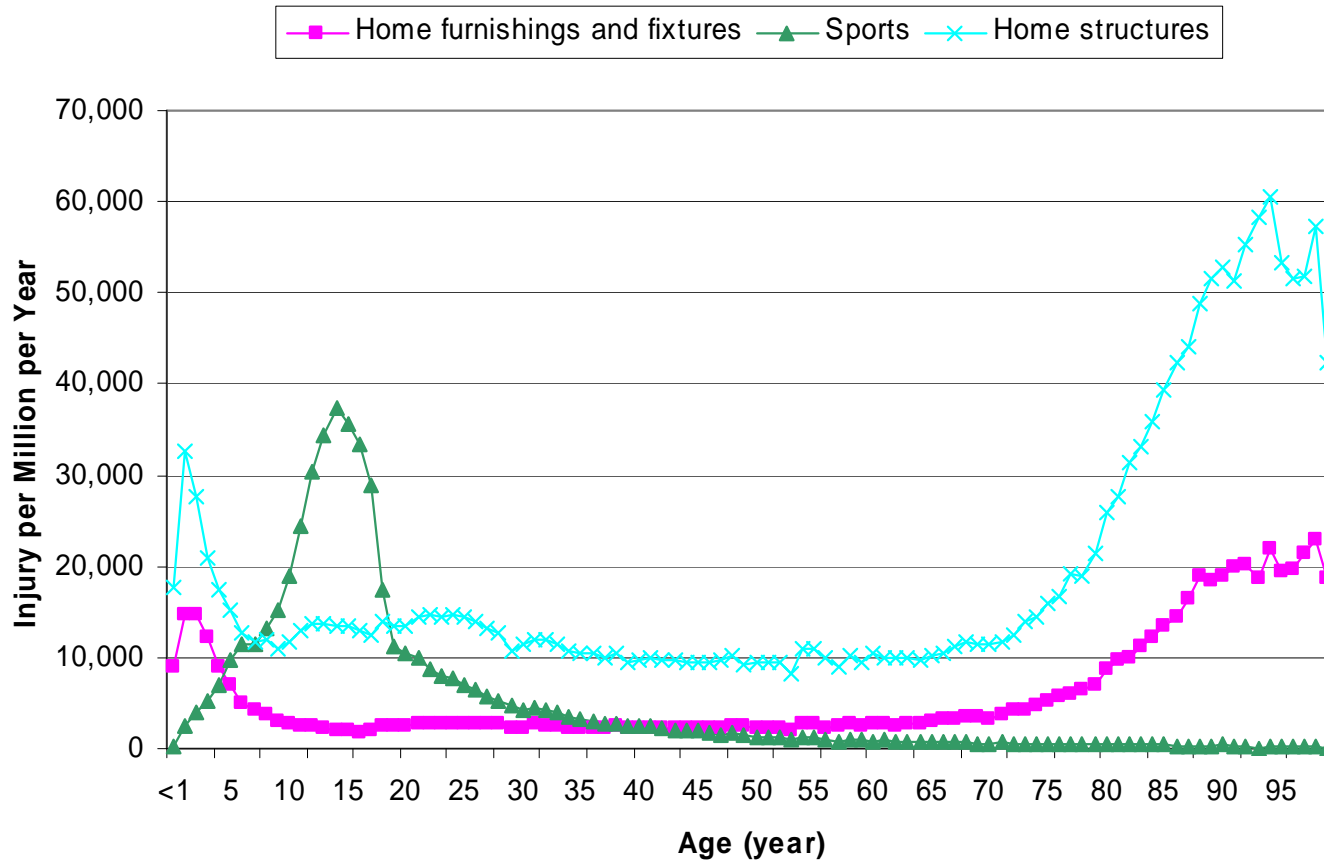
Category	Annualized Injury	Annualized Fatality
Home structures/construction materials	3,673,637	972
Sports and recreational activity	1,951,722	675
Home furnishings and fixtures	1,036,152	599
Housewares	741,658	33
Personal use items	522,705	157
Home workshop tools	409,281	98
Packaging and containers	386,219	59
Miscellaneous	297,341	41
Yard and garden equipment	266,168	70
Toys	233,300	18
Home and family maintenance products	149,843	67
Space heating and cooling appliances	130,069	145
Home communications and entertainment appliances	125,525	21
Kitchen appliances	118,646	53
Child nursery equipment and supplies	82,613	78
General household appliances	57,234	37
Home alarm/escape/protection devices	11,110	2
Farm equipment	9,989	267

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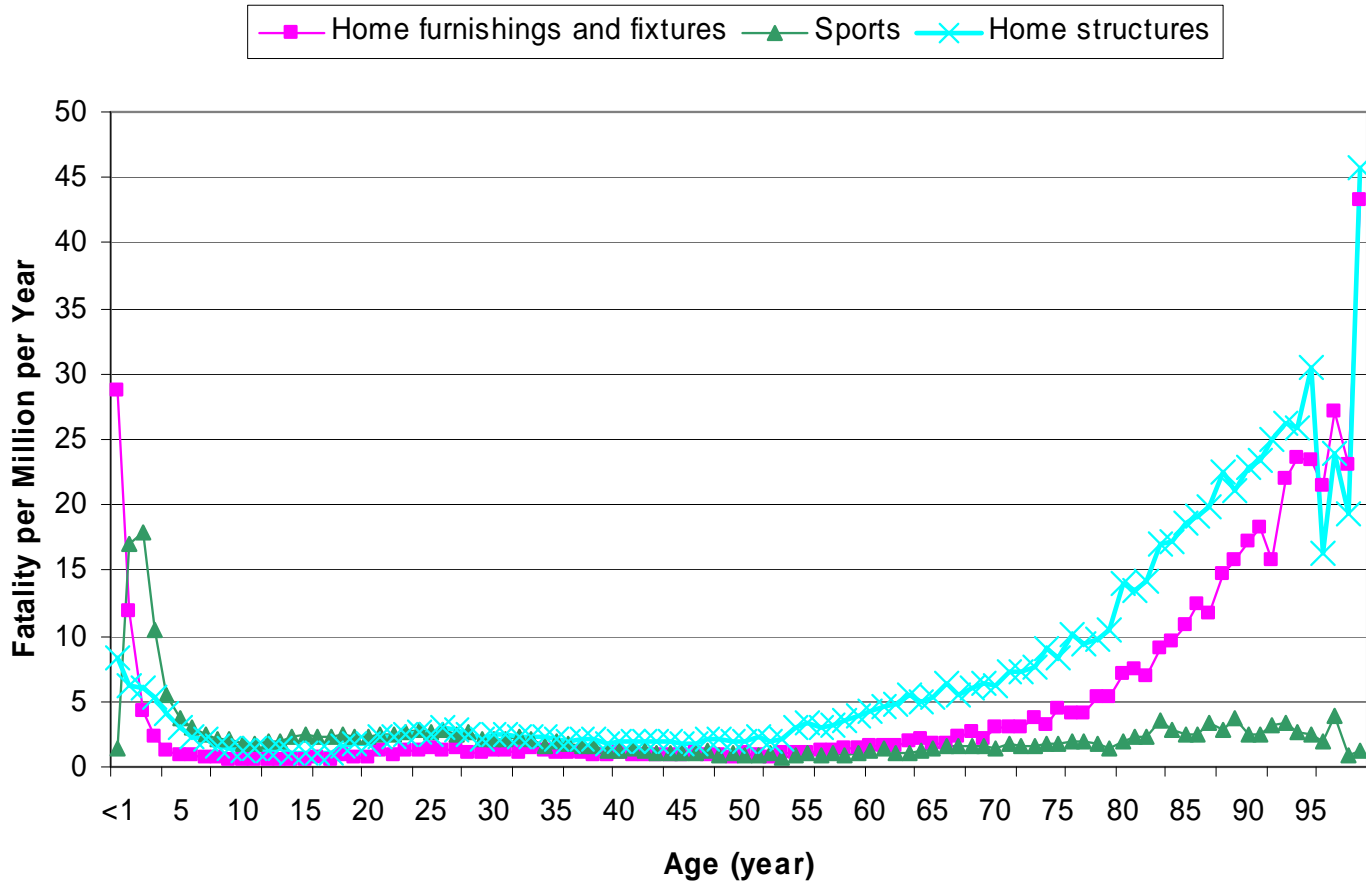
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Age Distribution of Top 3 Categories in Injury



Age Distribution of Top 3 Categories in Fatality



Top 10 Products/Activities in Injury

1. Stairs or Steps
1,044,790 Injuries



6. Knives
370,808 Injuries



2. Floors
746,231 Injuries



7. Tables
255,618 Injuries



3. Basketball
580,780 Injuries



8. Beds
254,880 Injuries



4. Bicycles
(excl. mountain or all-terrain)
499,085 Injuries



9. Ceilings or Walls
252,798 Injuries



5. Football
397,692 Injuries



10. Bathtubs or Showers
195,919 Injuries



Annual Averages, US CPSC NEISS, 2001-2005

Top 10 Products/Activities in Fatality

1. Swimming
543 Fatalities



6. Bicycles
(excl. mountain or all-terrain)
111 Fatalities



2. House fire
408 Fatalities



7. Beds
104 Fatalities



3. Bathtubs/showers
282 Fatalities



8. Farm Tractors
102 Fatalities



4. Stairs or steps
223 Fatalities



9. All Terrain Vehicles
89 Fatalities



5. Tractors (excl. farm tractors)
134 Fatalities

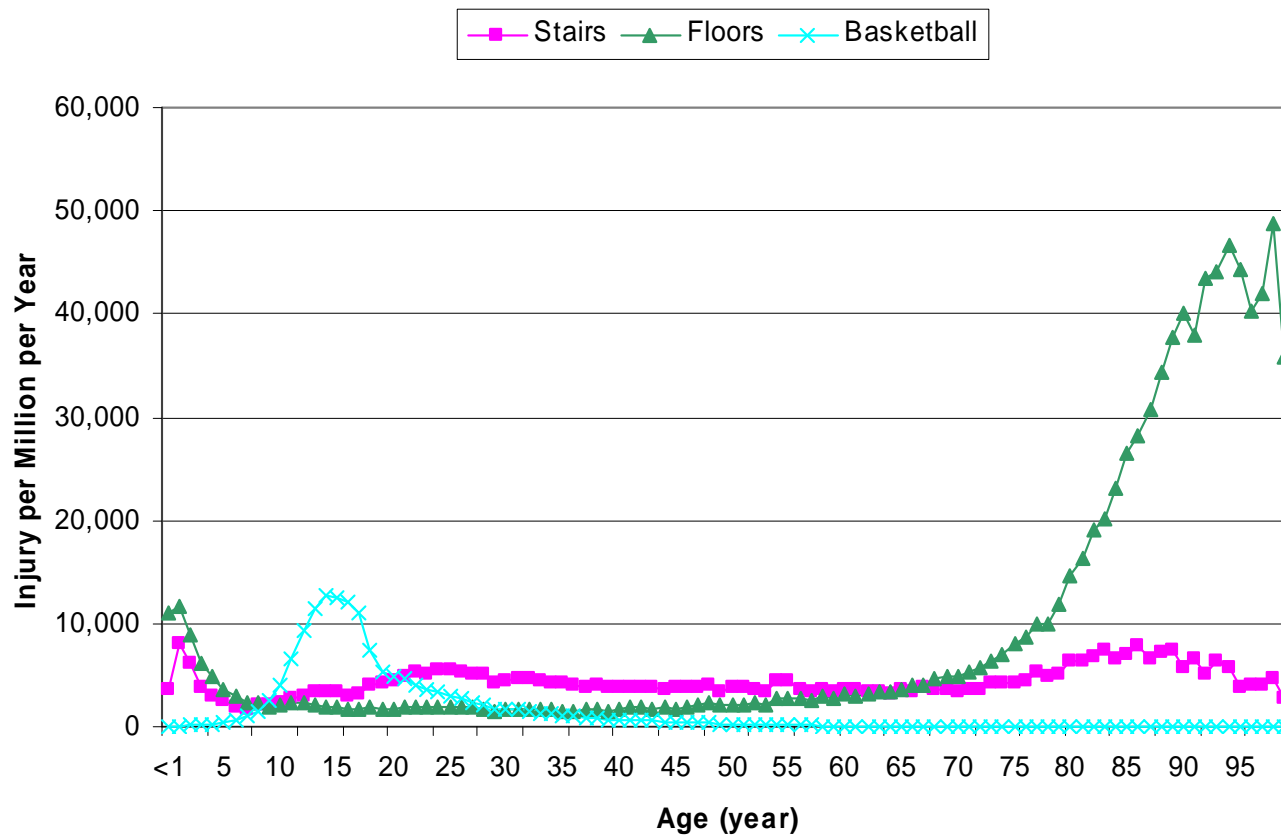


10. Snowmobiles
83 Fatalities

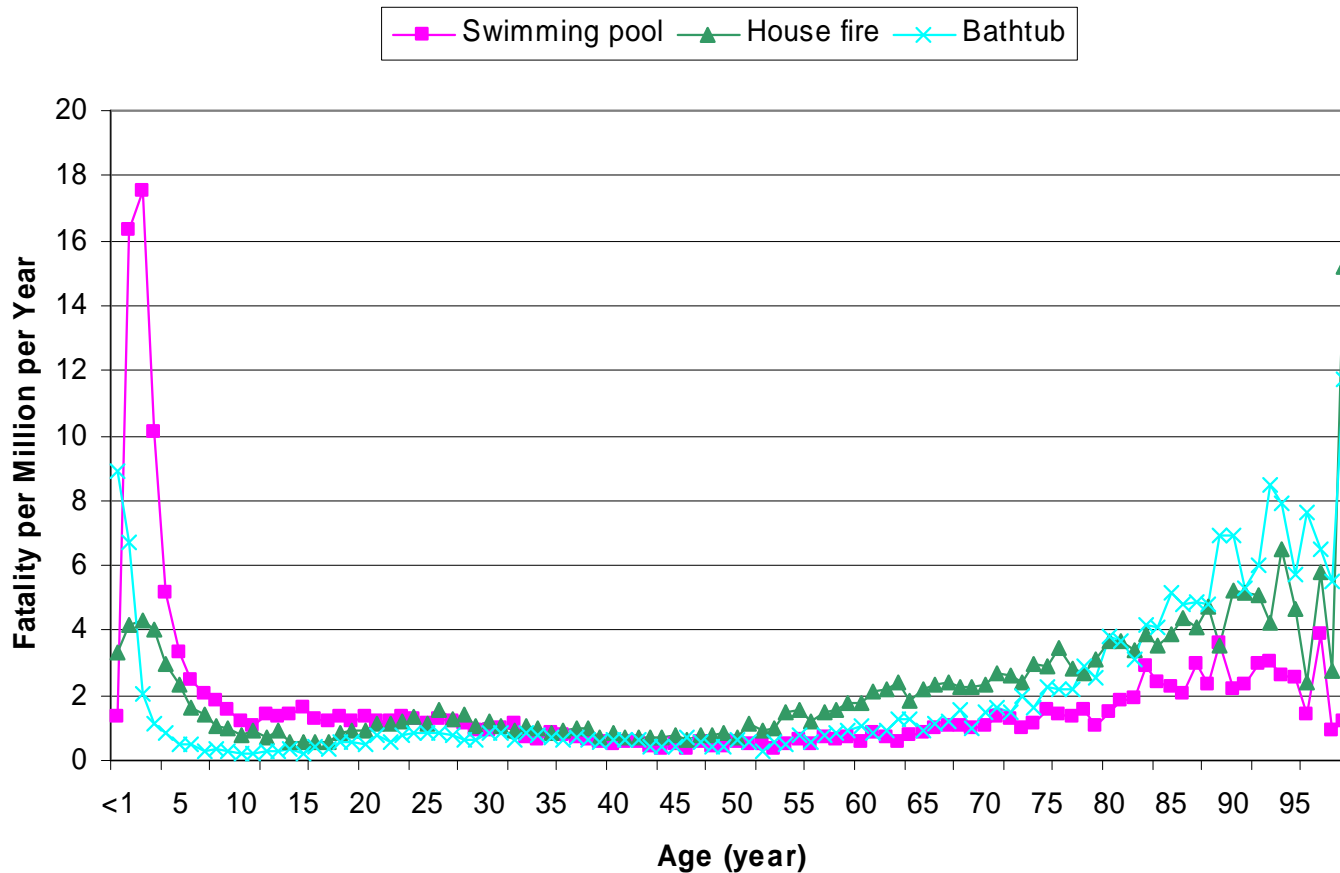


Annual Averages, US CPSC DTHS, 1983-2005

Age Distribution of Top 3 Products in Injury



Age Distribution of Top 3 Products in Fatality



- Most consumer product related injuries occur in the home
- Product hazards can be deceiving
- Significant differences between risk perception and epidemiological data
- Children and elderly are most susceptible groups, but patterns of injury may differ considerably across product category