

PREVENTING RURAL INJURIES AND VIOLENCE: EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK INFORMING PREVENTION IN COMMUNITIES



ATV and ORV safety

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- We found that most deaths (60%) from All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) occur on public roadways rather than off roads and involve riskier behaviors such as having passengers and not wearing helmets.
- We found that there was a 58% greater Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) crash rate in Iowa counties that passed ordinances allowing ORVs on public roadways.



Burns and fires

- We mapped serious house fires in Iowa and found that Iowans living in geographic areas that include poor housing conditions, overcrowded neighborhoods, and poverty have a higher risk of being seriously injured in a house fire.
- We found that serious fireworks injuries increased in Iowa after the legalization of fireworks sales, and these injuries were more serious and affected more bystanders and children.



Child passenger safety

- We found that children in rural communities of Iowa are less likely to be properly restrained in a vehicle according to state law. We found that child passengers in Iowa are less likely to be restrained (e.g., seat belt, booster seat) when traveling with unbelted drivers, teenage drivers, in rural areas, and in pick-up trucks.



Disaster preparedness

- We developed a tool to help older adults better prepare for disasters and are implementing the tool in Iowa communities.



Firearms safety and storage

- We surveyed Iowa youth from rural communities, finding that the vast majority had firearms in their homes. Of youth with rifles/shotguns in their homes, over half (51%) reported these firearms were stored unlocked. The vast majority of youth (85%) had fired rifles/shotguns, and many (58%) reported firing them frequently (>20 times total). Of youth who have fired rifles/shotguns, many started at very young ages (32% before age 9).



Mental health and suicide

- We studied trends in suicide deaths by military status and geography – such as those living in rural or medically underserved areas– and examined alternative models of emergency psychiatric care, such as mobile crisis outreach.
- We examined the pattern, cause, and consequence of emerging racial differences in overdose and suicide among rural populations.
- We identified contributing circumstances to multiple-death suicides in rural U.S. counties.
- We created and tested a new tool to better understand stressors of women farmers.



Older adult falls and older drivers

- We developed and tested a toolkit to refer older adults in Iowa to falls prevention programs that work. It is helping to guide Iowa communities to develop referral structures.
- We studied deprescribing of medications to prevent adverse events (such as falls) among older adults seen in rural primary care clinics and developed medication management tools for hospitals and promotional materials for the CDC on deprescribing and aging.
- We studied how well Iowa's driver licensing review system identifies older drivers who are at risk of crashing due to age-related driving skill decline.
- We found that loosening driving license review policies around in-person renewal and frequency was associated with increased crash and injury rates among older adults (national study).



Road safety

- We developed a toolkit and training for communities to implement a rural roadway campaign to improve driver safety around farm equipment.
- We investigated the factors that affect how drivers pass farm equipment and their perceptions about how other drivers handle passing.



Teen dating violence

- We studied readiness to implement a teen violence dating prevention program in rural Iowa schools. Our survey of Iowa school counselors found that they feel unprepared to prevent or respond to teen dating violence due to a lack of education, training, and policies.



Trauma care

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- We examined trends from the Iowa trauma registry, including age, cause of injury, mortality, and length of stay, and highlighted challenges faced by the Iowa trauma system (2024 report).

