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Injury Mortality in Individuals With Autism

Joseph Guan BS, and Guohua Li MD, DrPH

[+] [Author affiliations, information, and correspondence details](#)

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Abstract

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References

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Objectives. To examine epidemiological patterns of injury fatalities in individuals with a diagnosis of autism.

Methods. We identified individuals with a diagnosis of autism who died between 1999 and 2014 by screening causes of death in the multiple cause-of-death data files in the National Vital Statistics System based on the *International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision*, code F84.0. We used the general US population as the reference to calculate proportionate mortality ratios (PMRs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

Results. During the study period, 1367 deaths (1043 males and 324 females) in individuals with autism were recorded in the United States. The mean age at death for individuals

with autism was 36.2 years (SD = 20.9 years), compared with 72.0 years (SD = 19.2 years) for the general population. Of the deaths in individuals with autism, 381 (27.9%) were attributed to injury (PMR = 2.93; 95% CI = 2.64, 3.24), with suffocation (n = 90; PMR = 31.93; 95% CI = 25.69, 39.24) being the leading cause of injury mortality, followed by asphyxiation (n = 78; PMR = 13.50; 95% CI = 10.68, 16.85) and drowning (n = 74; PMR = 39.89; 95% CI = 31.34, 50.06).

Conclusions. Individuals with autism appear to be at substantially heightened risk for death from injury.