Kentucky Violent Death Reporting System (KVDRS)

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State Web Site:  https://kvdrs.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx

Sources of Information for the Database

Information collected for this surveillance system is gathered from death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, police reports, crime laboratory reports, and toxicology reports and then combined into the KVDRS database. After all raw data is stripped of personal identifying information, it is sent to the national database to be combined with information from the other 40 funded states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Together, this information provides a more complete picture of violent death. The national database is the only state-based surveillance system that pools data on violent deaths from multiple sources into a database. The sources that are used include the local and state medical examiner, coroner, law enforcement, crime lab, and vital statistics records. Without these pieces, the problem of violent Death in Kentucky, or in the nation, cannot be accurately explained. This project is funded by Cooperative Agreement CE09-904 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While there may be mandates for the data sources (i.e. death certificates and police), there is no federal or state mandate that requires the collection of this data. However, if the data were not collected, funding would be lost.
**Description of the Data Collected**
In Kentucky, information related to homicides, suicides, and firearm-related deaths have, in the past, remained inaccessible and unreliable. The coroner system is not centralized, and while police and forensic laboratory data are centralized and available, they have not been collected and combined with additional investigative information for violent death research purposes. By integrating multiple data sources to form a violent death surveillance system, formerly disparate pieces of information can be compiled and analyzed.

In addition to adult data, Kentucky collects Child Fatality Review (CFR) data using the pediatric module within the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS). The Division of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) within the Department for Public Health collects CFR data, and data is exchanged for use by both agencies.

**Strengths of the Data**
To improve coroner reporting, The Coroner Investigation Reporting System (CIRS) was designed, developed, and distributed. County coroners use CIRS reporting forms and/or notebooks and/or the CIRS web system for improved record keeping. This system was the first step in centralizing coroner investigation reports in the commonwealth for the benefit of not only the KVDRS, but of many other research activities. The CIRS is expanding to the "Death Scene Investigation" (DSI) system with users being any death investigator.

**Data Limitations**
KVDRS reports include only deaths occurring within Kentucky; this allows KVDRS staff to collect additional investigative information. Therefore, the counts of suicides, homicides, and unintentional firearmfatalities in KVDRS reporting will differ from the Office of Vital Statistics and the National Center for Health Statistics, who report on Kentucky residents regardless of where the death occurred.

**Specific Uses of Information**
Results from KVDRS data analysis are use for peer-review publications, reports, briefs for advocacy groups preventing suicide, intimate partner violence, veteran suicide, child abuse, and responding to media requests. KVDRS data has also been used to develop proposals for National Institute of Health funding and National Institutes of Justice funding.

**Publications**


**Publications (Continued)**


**KVDRS Reports**


**Presentations**


**Media**

**System Evaluation**
The data collection is routinely monitored utilizing quality control standards developed by CDC. Evaluation of quality is determined through quarterly and annual reports of these performance standards.

**Data Set Availability**
Statewide and county level aggregate summary data can be provided upon request. In addition to reports, unidentified Excel data files may be requested.

This data set includes hundreds of variables including circumstantial data (i.e. precipitating events leading to a violent death), demographic and weapon information. Data are available from 2005 to 2015. National data are also available following the approval of the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The NVDRS DSA was created to govern the protection and use of sensitive or potentially identifiable NVDRS data, as required by the NVDRS Data Re-release Plan. Prior to release of NVDRS restricted access microdata (RAD) by the CDC, a data sharing agreement must be established for any users who are not currently employed by the Division of Violence Prevention or the Office of Statistics and Programming, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC).

**Average Yearly Sample Size:** 1000-1300  
**Smallest Geographic Level Released:** County

If you would like to request data please provide the following information:

Name, organization, reason for data, and intended data usage. The request will need to include years, geographic level, and specific variables. There is no cost for data sets, but following data usage, a return email would be greatly appreciated specifying in what capacity the data was used (i.e. citation from a presentation, grant application or a report).

Send data requests to Dr. Sabrina Brown, [sabrina.brown@uky.edu](mailto:sabrina.brown@uky.edu).

**Data Release Policy**
Data with cell counts less than 5 will need to be reported as “<5.” No personal identifying information will be released.

**Data Publications**
The KVDRS program produces annual statewide statistical summary briefs of important topics that emerge when monitoring trends and patterns of violent deaths. Staff and College of Public Health students produce peer-reviewed publications, contribute to state and national reports each year, collaborate on proposals for new funding, and conduct state and national presentations.
Suggested Data Citation

*Data are provisional and subject to change

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