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Increasing trauma deaths in the United States.

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OBJECTIVE: To determine the impact of the increasing aging population on trauma mortality relative to mortality from cancer and heart disease in the United States.

BACKGROUND: The population in the United States continues to increase as medical advancements allow people to live longer. The resulting changes in the leading causes of death have not yet been recognized.

METHODS: Data were obtained (2000-2010) from the Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System database of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We defined trauma deaths as unintentional injuries, suicides, and homicides.

RESULTS: From 2000 to 2010, the US population increased by 9.7% and the number of trauma deaths increased by 22.8%. Trauma deaths and death rates deceased in individuals younger than 25 years but increased for those 25 years and older. During this period, death rates for cancer and heart disease decreased. The largest increases in trauma deaths were in individuals in their fifth and sixth decades of life. Since 2000, the largest proportional increase (118%) in crude trauma deaths occurred in 54-year-olds. Overall, in 2010, trauma was the leading cause of death in individuals 46 years and younger. Trauma remains the leading cause of years of life lost.

RESULTS: ***(sic)*** Trauma is now the leading cause of death for individuals 46 years and younger. The largest increase in the number of trauma deaths and the highest crude number of trauma deaths occurred in baby boomers. Policy makers allocating resources should be made aware of the larger impact of trauma on our aging and burgeoning US population.