Vascular trauma to young men on the rise in WA

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Motorcycle and motor vehicle injuries affecting young males aged 20 to 29 is up to 3.2 per cent in Western Australia, according to a study in the latest RACS publication of the *ANZ Journal of Surgery*.

The proportion of vascular trauma is approaching levels similar to that of the United States but are particularly characterised by blunt trauma to the neck, thorax and abdomen from road trauma or stabbing events.

Although overall mortality is down, thoracic injuries have the highest mortality rate due to life-threatening associated injuries, particularly to the main artery of the aorta, which caused half of all deaths.

A prospective trauma database identified presentations of vascular injuries to the Royal Perth Hospital between January 2000 and December 2010.

The 10 year study included more than 45,000 patients, with vascular injuries doubling the previous study. Data was recorded from time of arrival and did not include those who had died at the scene or in transit.

Delays in diagnosis for blunt vascular injuries from motor vehicle accidents was found to be particularly relevant in Western Australia where delays up to five days to access definitive treatment have been recorded and 11 per cent of patients experienced transit times exceeding 24 hours.

Co-author and WA Trauma Committee Chair Mr Sudhakar Rao said it was important to recognise common mechanisms and associated injuries to assist in earlier diagnosis of vascular injury and timely transfer and treatment.

"We must note, however, that while reaching levels of vascular injuries similar to the US, unlike America, the majority of these injuries are from motor vehicle and motorbike collisions, and to young males in our community," Mr Rao said.

"We have become complacent with our attitude to road trauma, and this study is proof of the need to step up the campaign to help save young lives on our roads."

Read the [full article](#).

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