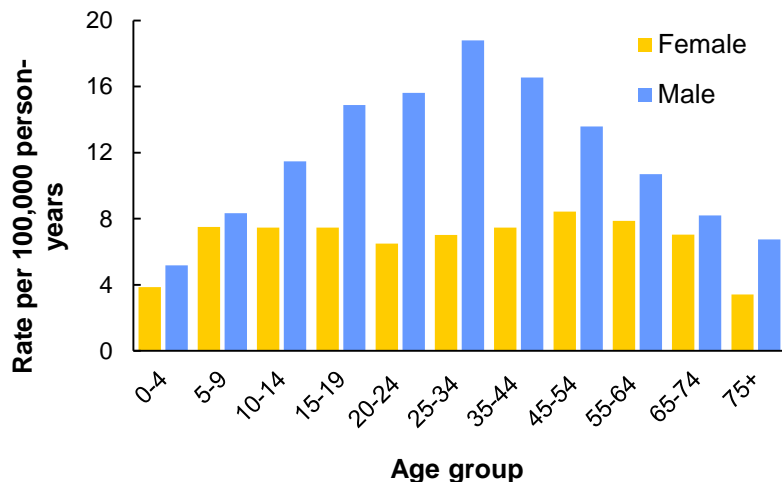


## NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS FOR SNAKE AND LIZARD BITES

The North Carolina Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection tool (NC DETECT) provides public health officials and hospital users with the capacity for statewide early event detection and timely public health surveillance. Through NC DETECT, users can access near real-time data from North Carolina acute care emergency departments (EDs), the Carolinas Poison Center (CPC), and the Pre-Hospital Medical Information System (PreMIS). NC DETECT data from ED visits have become increasingly important for the surveillance of injury morbidity in North Carolina. NC DETECT is funded by the NC Division of Public Health (NC DPH). This document summarizes 2010-2013 ED visits by in-state and out-of-state residents with an external cause of injury code (E-code) for venomous and non-venomous bites by snakes and lizards.\*

### Rates of NC ED visits for snake and lizard bites, 2010-2013



- Over the period 2010-2013, there were 3,812 ED visits due to venomous and non-venomous snake and lizard bites with an average annual rate of 9.8 visits per 100,000 person-years. There were 888 visits in 2010, 981 visits in 2011, 1,041 visits in 2012, and 902 visits in 2013.

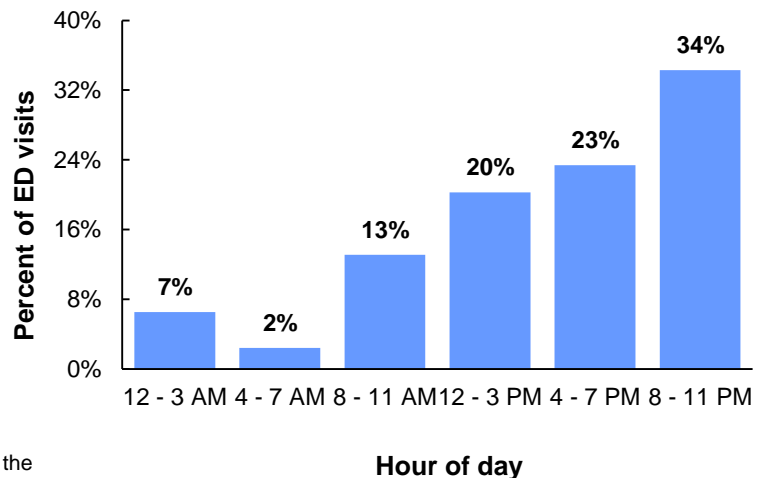
- Men were more likely to visit a NC ED for a snake or lizard bite than women. In 2010-2013, the average rate for men was 12.8 ED visits per 100,000 person-years compared to 7.0 ED visits per 100,000 person-years for women.

- Among men, the rate peaked for adults 25-34 years of age with a rate of 18.8 visits per 100,000 person-years. Among women, rates were relatively steady across most age groups (except the youngest and oldest age groups).

### NC ED visits by month and hour of day due to snake and lizard bites, 2010-2013

- ED visits due to snake and lizard bites were most common during the summer months with 83.0% of all ED visits occurring during the months of May-September. The month with the highest percentage of visits was the month of July (18.4%).

- Most visits to the ED occurred during the hours of late afternoon and evening; this coincides with the time when snakes are most active.



\*For questions about the methods used to identify snake and lizard bites in the ED, please email [ncdetect@listserv.med.unc.edu](mailto:ncdetect@listserv.med.unc.edu).

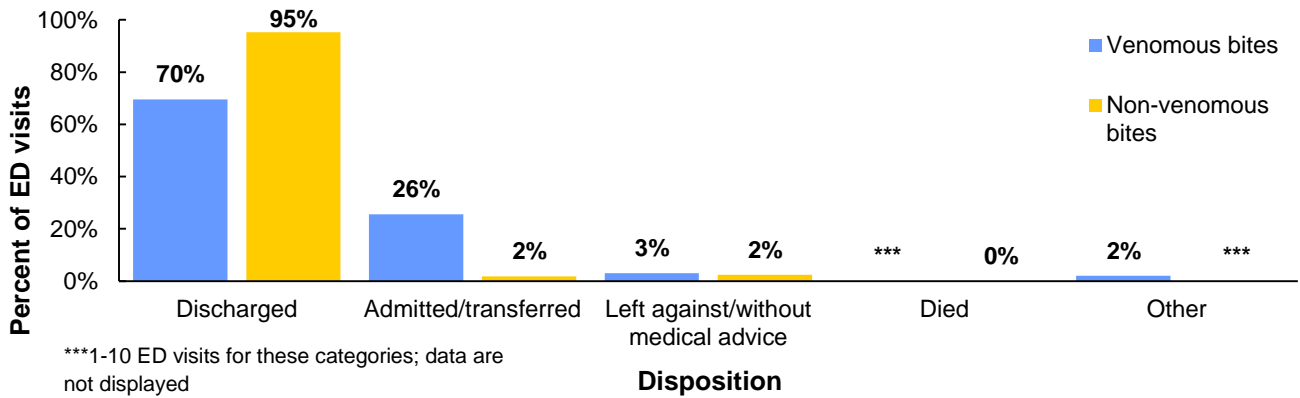


Source: Carolina Center for Health Informatics / <https://cchi.web.unc.edu> / Department of Emergency Medicine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2014.  
 NC Division of Public Health / [www.publichealth.nc.gov](http://www.publichealth.nc.gov) / Injury Epidemiology & Surveillance Unit/ 919-707-5425  
 NC Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool (NC DETECT) / [www.ncdetect.org](http://www.ncdetect.org) / 919-843-2361  
 State of North Carolina / Department of Health and Human Services / [www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov)  
 NC DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

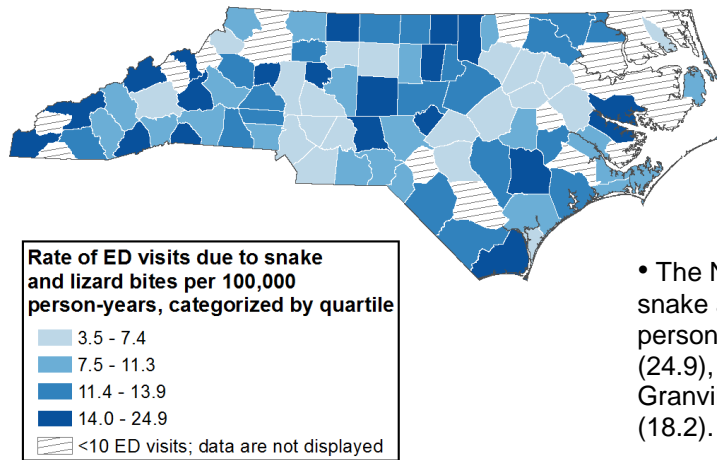
### NC ED visits due to snake and lizard bites by type of bite, 2010-2013

• Among the 3,812 ED visits due to snake and lizard bites, 3,053 were classified as bites due to a venomous species (80.1%) and 759 were classified as bites due to a non-venomous species of snake or lizard (19.9%).

• In general, venomous bites were more severe than non-venomous bites. Individuals with venomous bites were more likely to be admitted to the hospital or intensive care unit or transferred (25.5%) than non-venomous bites (1.7%). Individuals with venomous bites were also more likely to arrive at the ED via ambulance (22.9%) than individuals with non-venomous bites (12.7%).



### Population-based rates of ED visits due to snake and lizard bites by NC county, 2010-2013



• The NC counties with the highest rates of snake and lizard bites (visits per 100,000 person-years in parentheses) were Swain (24.9), Person (21.0), Stokes (19.7), Granville (19.0), and Transylvania counties (18.2).

- Wear appropriate footwear (not sandals) when walking outside in the late afternoon or evening hours as this is the time when snakes are most active.
- Do not pick up a snake or deliberately engage it in any way. Many people are bitten when they try to harm or take a closer look at a snake.
- If you are bitten by a venomous snake, please seek immediate medical attention. Prompt medical treatment may prevent some long-term health effects of envenomation.

For more information on preventing injuries please visit the NC Injury and Violence Prevention Branch website at [www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov) or visit [www.injuryfreenc.org](http://www.injuryfreenc.org).



Source: Carolina Center for Health Informatics / <https://cchi.web.unc.edu> / Department of Emergency Medicine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2014.  
 NC Division of Public Health / [www.publichealth.nc.gov](http://www.publichealth.nc.gov) / Injury Epidemiology & Surveillance Unit/ 919-707-5425  
 NC Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool (NC DETECT) / [www.ncdetect.org](http://www.ncdetect.org) / 919-843-2361  
 State of North Carolina / Department of Health and Human Services / [www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov)  
 NC DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider.