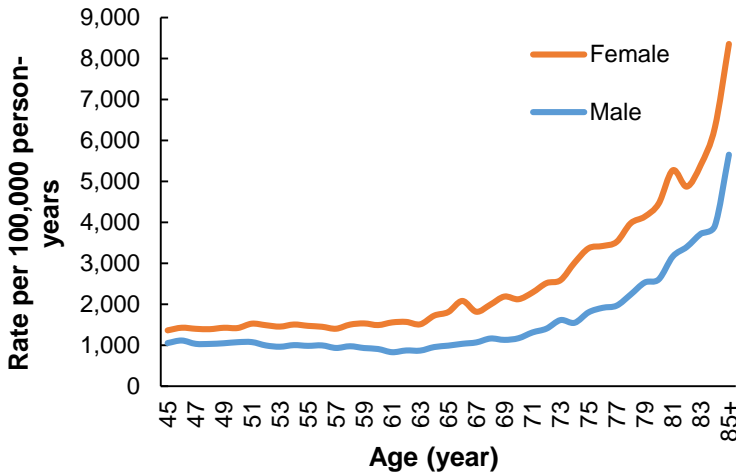


## NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS FOR INJURIES DUE TO FALLS AMONG ADULTS ≥ 45 YEARS OF AGE

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 2012 ED visits with an external cause of injury code (E-code) for an unintentional fall among adults ≥ 45 years of age.

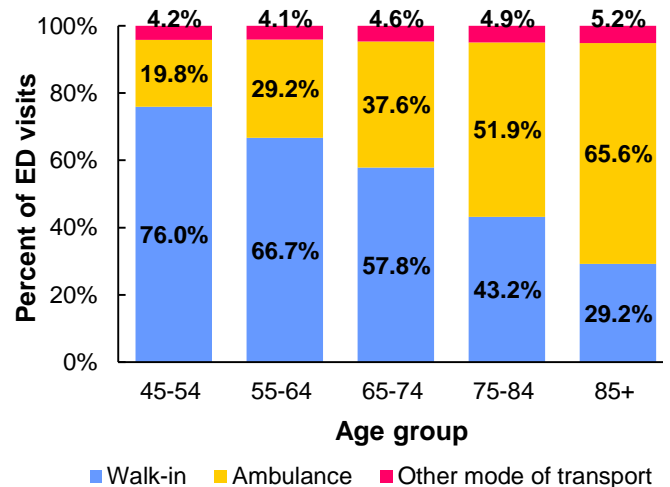
**Rates of North Carolina ED visits due to falls among adults ≥ 45 years of age, 2012**



- In 2012, there were 72,103 ED visits with E-codes for unintentional falls among adults ≥ 45 years of age. Among the 408,085 ED visits due to injury in this age group, 18% were due to falls.
- In 2012, there were 1,842 NC ED visits due to falls per 100,000 person-years.
- Rates were higher among women (2,303 visits per 100,000 person-years) than among men (1,308 visits per 100,000 person-years).

### Severity of falls among adults ≥ 45 years of age, 2012

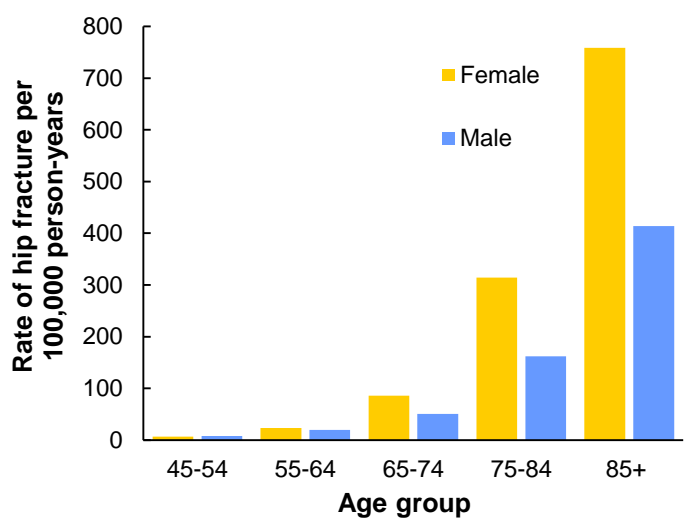
- Overall, 39% of adults ≥ 45 years of age arrived at the ED via ambulance.
- The percent of individuals who arrived via ambulance varied by age group. For example, over 65% of individuals ≥ 85 years of age arrived at the ED via ambulance.
- Disposition also varied by age group. Overall, 11% of adults ≥ 45 years of age were admitted to a hospital; however, 21% of individuals ≥ 85 years of age were admitted to the hospital.



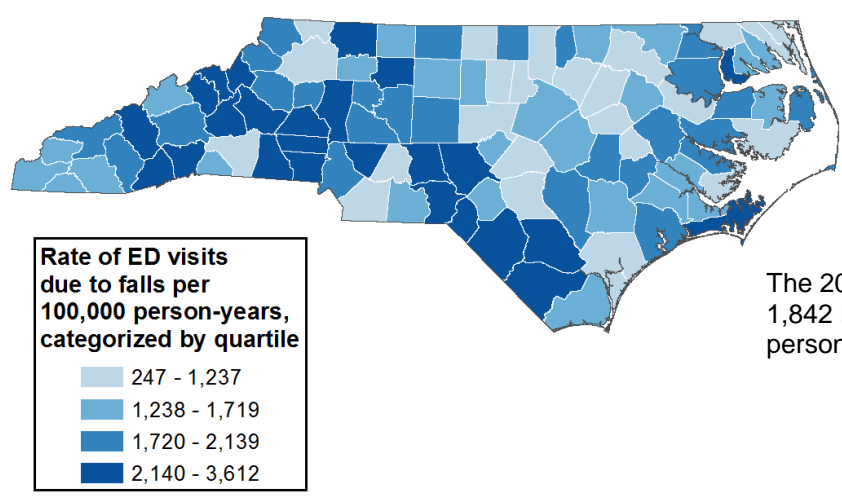
Source: Carolina Center for Health Informatics, Department of Emergency Medicine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2014.  
 NC Division of Public Health / [www.publichealth.nc.gov](http://www.publichealth.nc.gov) / Injury Epidemiology & Surveillance Unit/ 919-707-5425  
 NC Disease Event 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)  
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### Rates of hip fractures due to falls among adults ≥ 45 years of age, 2012

- Falls are a common cause of hip fractures among older adults. For this population, the number of visits due to hip fractures was 2,967 visits with a rate of 75.8 ED visits per 100,000 person-years.
- Rates of hip fractures were about twice as high among women (101.9 visits per 100,000 person-years) than among men (45.6 visits per 100,000 person-years).
- The NC counties with the highest rates of ED visits due to falls (visits per 100,000 person-years in parentheses) were Avery (3,612), Mitchell (3,382), Robeson (3,152), McDowell (3,027), and Richmond counties (2,967).



### Population-based rates of ED visits due to falls by North Carolina county among adults ≥ 45 years of age, 2012



The 2012 rate for NC was 1,842 ED visits per 100,000 person-years.

### Prevention strategies

- Engage in regular physical activity to help maintain muscle tone and prevent loss of balance. Tai chi is one form of exercise that is useful for falls prevention.
- Have your medications reviewed by a pharmacist to identify any interactions that could increase your risk of a fall.
- Speak with your doctor about falls prevention and identify health conditions, such as vision problems or osteoporosis, which may put you at an increased risk for a fall.
- Assess your home for falls hazards (such as tripping hazards, inadequate lighting, uneven surfaces, etc.).

For more information on preventing injuries due to falls 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, Department of Emergency Medicine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2014.  
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