

2023 Children’s Camp Incident Summary Report

New York State Department of Health

Bureau of Community Environmental Health and Food Protection

In 2023, local health departments (LHD) reported 2,484 regulated children's camps operated in New York State (NYS). Of these, 671 were overnight camps and 1,813 were day camps, including 263 municipal day camps and 32 traveling summer day camps. It is estimated that over 900,000 children attend NYS children's camps each year.

To assess health and safety at camps, a children's camp incident surveillance system is maintained. Camp operators are required to report serious injuries, illnesses, potential rabies exposures, administrations of epinephrine, and allegations of camper abuse to LHDs. These incidents are investigated by LHDs, and information is entered into the New York State Department of Health’s Environmental Health Inspection and Permitting System. A total of 942 incidents (1,529 victims) meeting criteria for reportable incidents in Subpart 7-2 of the New York State Sanitary Code (SSC) were reported statewide in 2023 (Figure 1), indicating that less than two out of one thousand campers experienced injury and illness while at camp. Statewide analysis of the data is used for injury prevention and control, develop administrative guidance, and determine amendments needed to the SSC. The following summarizes the 2023 reportable incidents.

Injuries:

There were 546 reported injuries to 535 victims reported during the 2023 camp season (a victim may experience more than one reportable injury in a single incident). This represents a 6 percent increase compared to 2022 and a 26 percent decrease compared to the 15-year average of reportable injuries occurring at children’s camps (Figure 2). Figures 3 through 16 provide details as to the types of injuries sustained and activities at the time of injury during the 2023 camp season. Injuries reported are those that meet the criteria in Subpart 7-2 of the SSC including:

- Camper injuries that result in:
 - death or require resuscitation;
 - admission to a hospital (treatment in the emergency room (ER) is not considered admission to a hospital);
 - eye, head, neck or spine injuries which require referral to a hospital or other facility for medical treatment;
 - bone fractures or dislocations;
 - lacerations that require sutures, staples, or medical glue; or
 - second or third degree burns to 5 percent or more of the body.

- Staff injuries which result in death, require resuscitation, or admission to a hospital (treatment in the ER is not considered admission to a hospital).

Illnesses and Illness Outbreaks:

Camper and staff illnesses suspected of being water-, food-, or air-borne, or spread by contact are required to be reported. There were a total of 268 individual illnesses and 75 illness outbreaks reported during the 2023 camping season (Figures 17 – 18). Illness outbreaks are detailed in the table on page 2.

Outbreak Type		Number of Outbreaks	Number Ill
Mandated Reportable Communicable Disease (per Part 2)	COVID-19	30	170
	Group A Strep	1	6
Acute Illness or Disease	Impetigo	4	29
	Coxsackie Virus	9	39
	Rhinovirus	1	11
Parasitic	Pediculosis	8	43
Respiratory Infection	Strep throat	6	56
	Respiratory Infection	2	6
Eye Infection	Eye Infection	7	36
Gastrointestinal	Gastrointestinal of Unknown Etiology	5	170
	Norovirus	2	74
Total		75	640

Epinephrine Administrations:

There were 29 incidents in which epinephrine was administered during the 2023 camping season (Figure 19). Of these, 12 administrations were for food allergies, 11 administrations were for insect stings, and 6 administrations for an unknown allergen.

Of the total administrations, 10 epinephrine auto-injectors were from the camp’s supply, 14 were from the patient’s supply, and 5 were from EMS Providers or Hospital administered.

Rabies Exposures:

There were 14 reported exposure incidents resulting in 36 campers and staff potentially exposed to rabies in the 2023 camping season (Figure 20). Thirteen of the 14 incidents involved exposure to a bat. In eight of these incidents, the bat was not captured, which resulted in 19 individuals being recommended for rabies post exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Sixteen individuals received PEP treatment and three refused treatment. In four incidents, the bat was captured and tested negative for rabies, which resulted in PEP treatment being avoided for 15 individuals. In one incident, the bat was captured and tested positive for rabies, which resulted in one camper receiving PEP treatment. In addition to the bat-exposures, one incident involved a potential rabies exposure from a rabbit. PEP was not necessary in this incident after a 10-day observation of the animal ruled out rabies.

Allegations of Physical and Sexual Abuse:

There were 12 allegations of physical or sexual abuse of campers reported during the 2023 camping season. Of these incidents, four involved alleged physical abuse and eight involved alleged sexual abuse. The alleged perpetrator was another camper in nine incidents, a counselor in one incident, and other camp staff in two incidents.

An allegation of abuse is investigated by law enforcement when it may contain a violation of the Penal Law. The LHD investigates all allegations to determine if the camp complied with supervision, staffing and other policies and procedures required by the Subpart 7-2 of the SSC.

Justice Center Reportable Incidents:

In 2023, there were three incidents at Camps for Children with Developmental Disabilities (enrollment of 20% or more campers with developmental disabilities) reported to the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs (Justice Center). All three reports were classified by the Justice Center as Significant Incidents and were investigated by LHDs for compliance with Subpart 7-2 of the SSC. Of these, two allegations involved failure to provide a camper their medication, and one involved inadequate staffing levels being provided by the camp. (Figure 21).

Incidents required to be reported to the Justice Center include Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Psychological Abuse, Deliberate Misuse of Restraint, Aversive Conditioning, Neglect, Controlled Substances, Obstruction, and Significant Incidents. Significant Incidents include conduct between campers with developmental disabilities that would constitute abuse, and improper treatment/care by camp staff which impairs or creates a reasonably foreseeable potential to impair the health, safety, or welfare of a disabled camper, including but not limited to unauthorized seclusion, unauthorized use of time-out, improper medication administration (prescribed or over-the-counter), and inappropriate use of restraints.

For the purpose of this summary report, Justice Center incidents may also be included in other categories, such as an injury, illness, or incident of alleged physical and sexual abuse, if the incident also met the criteria in Subpart 7-2 of the SSC for a reportable incident.

Fatalities:

In 2023, there were two reported fatalities at children’s camps this year. Details of these incidents are not provided in this report to ensure privacy, however, the investigations of these fatalities by the respective LHDs found no violations of Subpart 7-2 at either camp.

Figures:

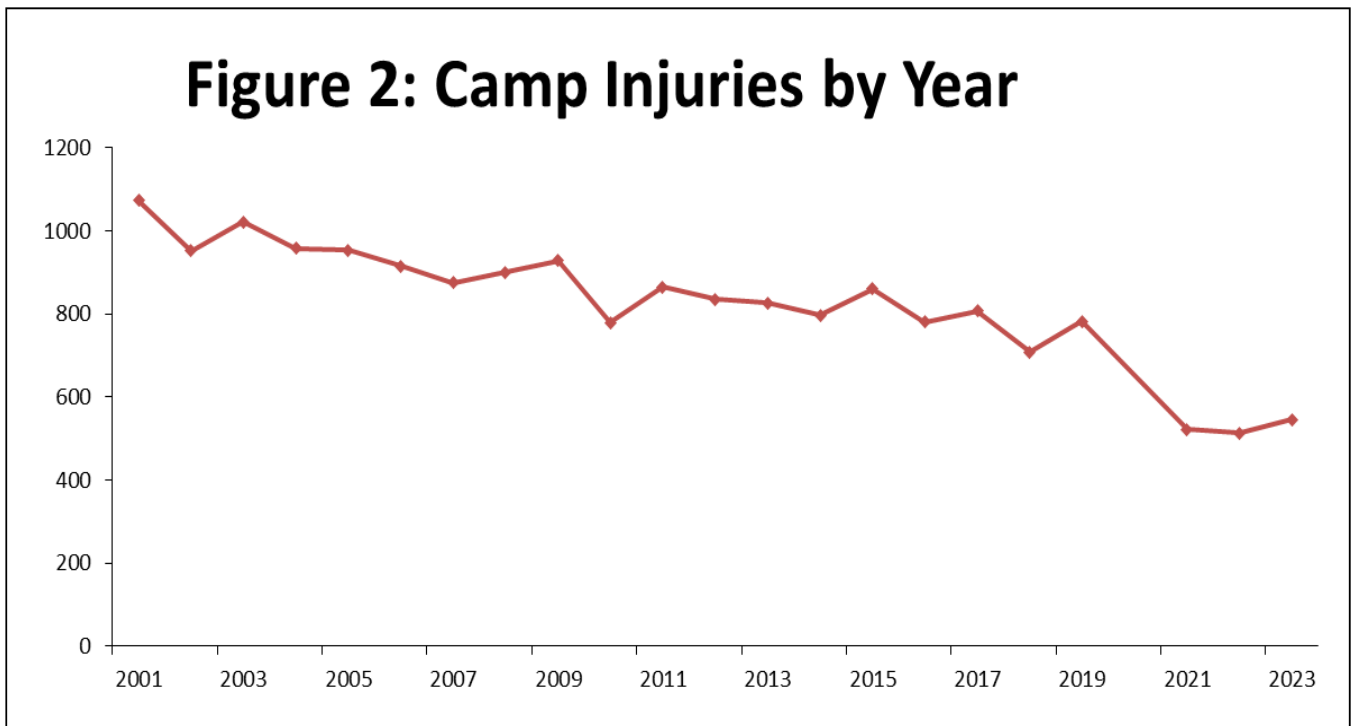
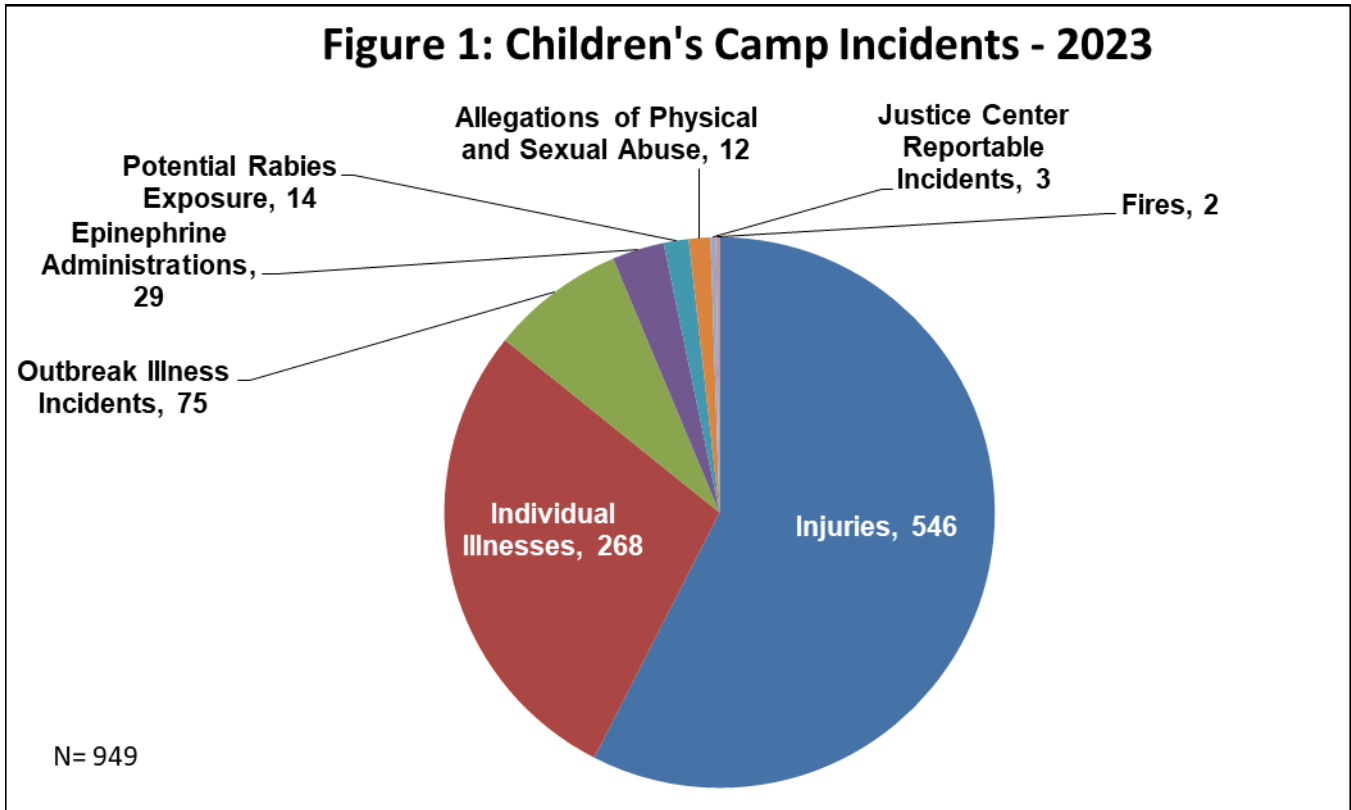


Figure 3: Injuries by Camp Type - 2023

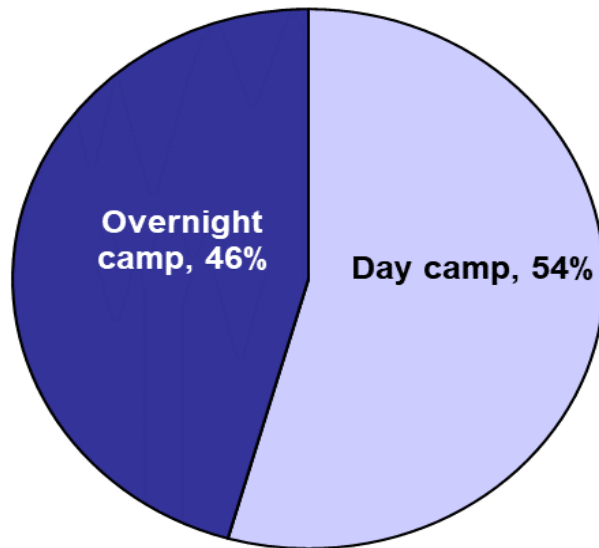
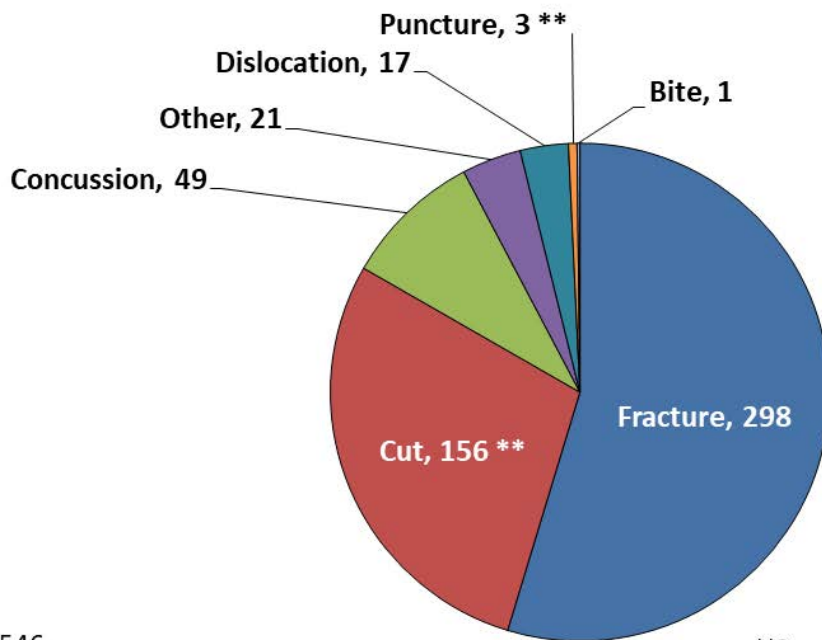


Figure 4: Injuries by Type - 2023



N=546

**Requiring sutures, staples, or medical glue

Figure 5: Injuries by Activity - 2023

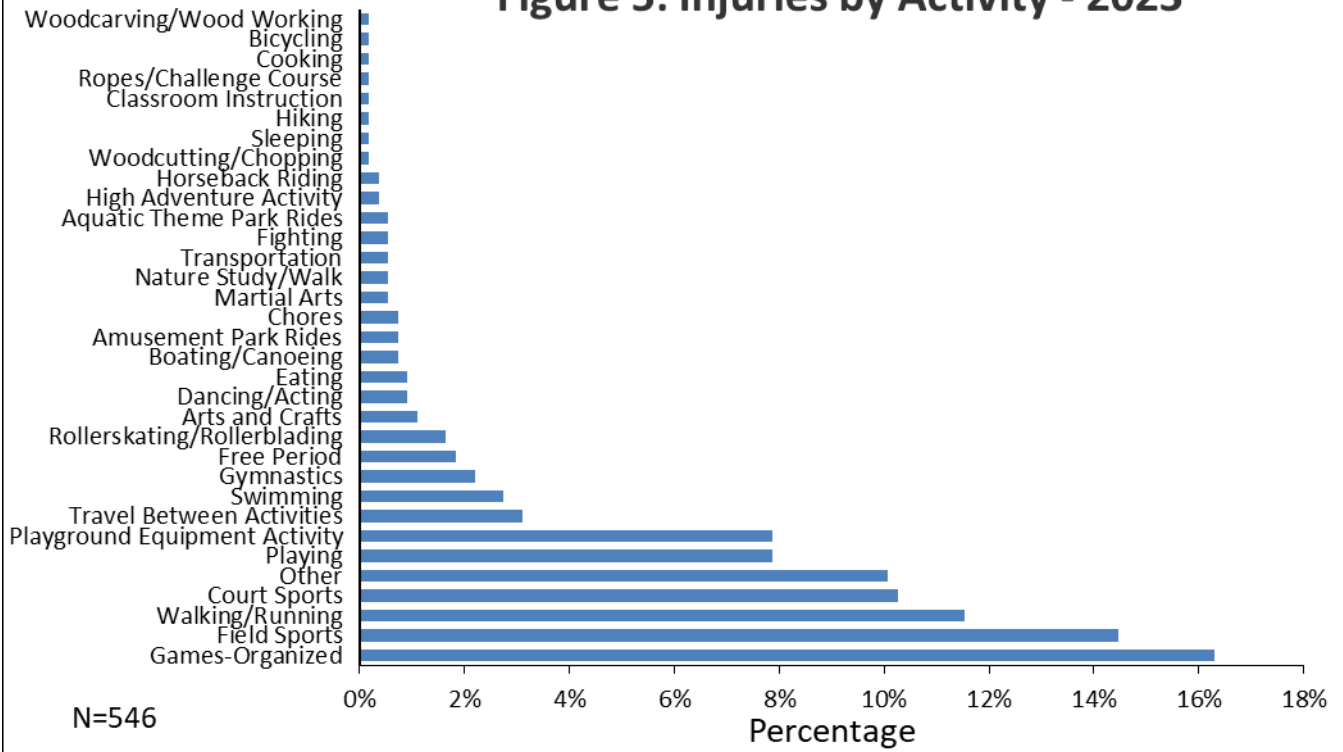


Figure 6: Sport Injuries by Activity - 2023

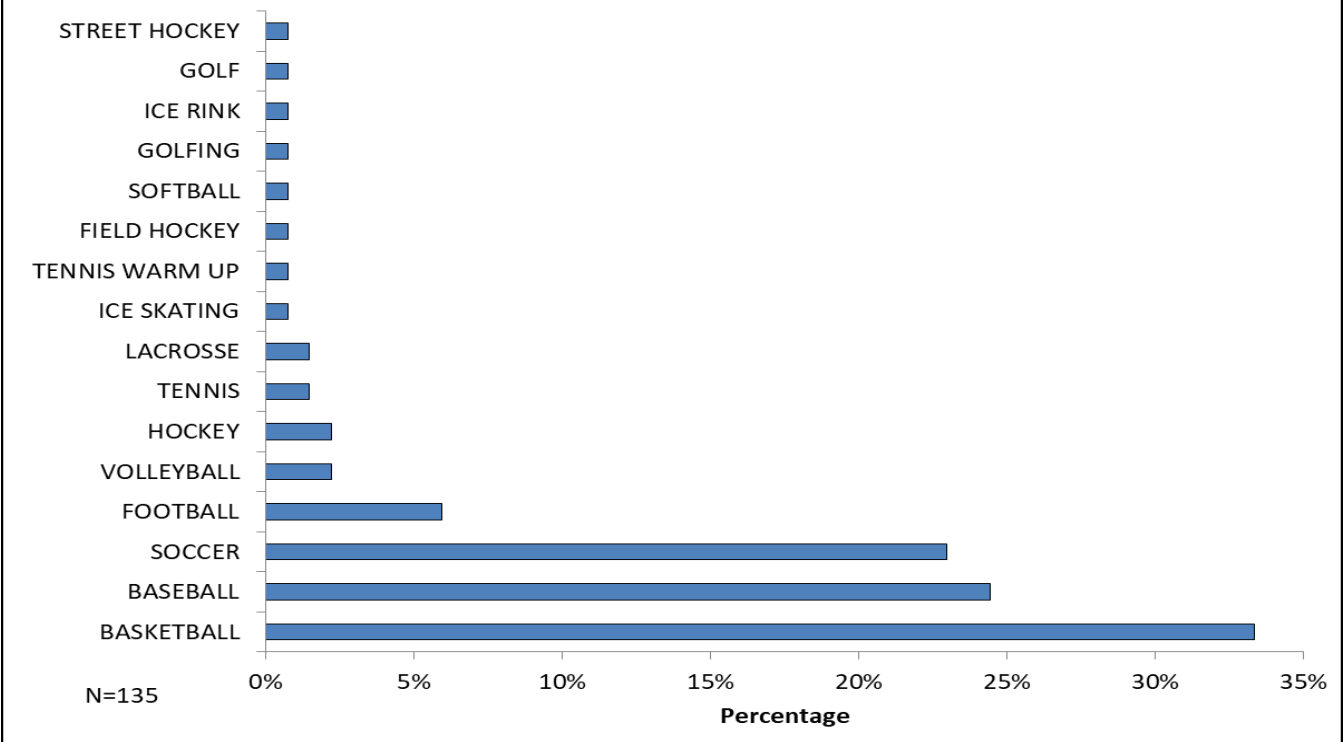
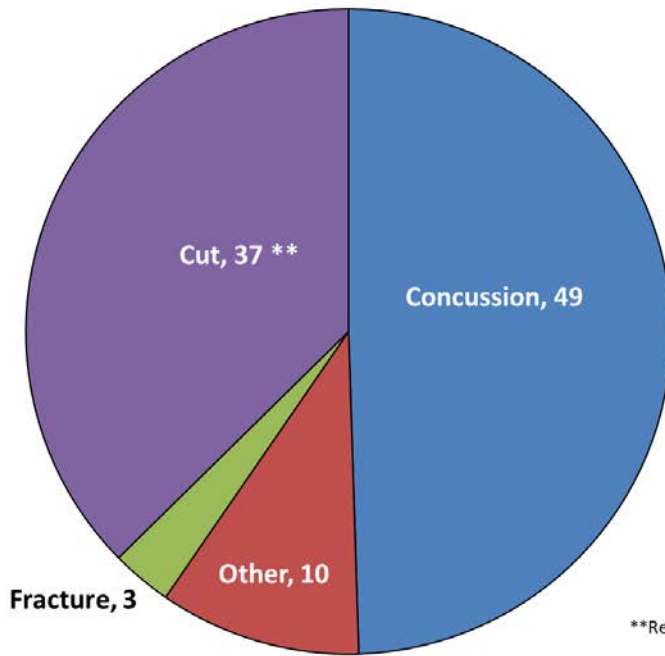


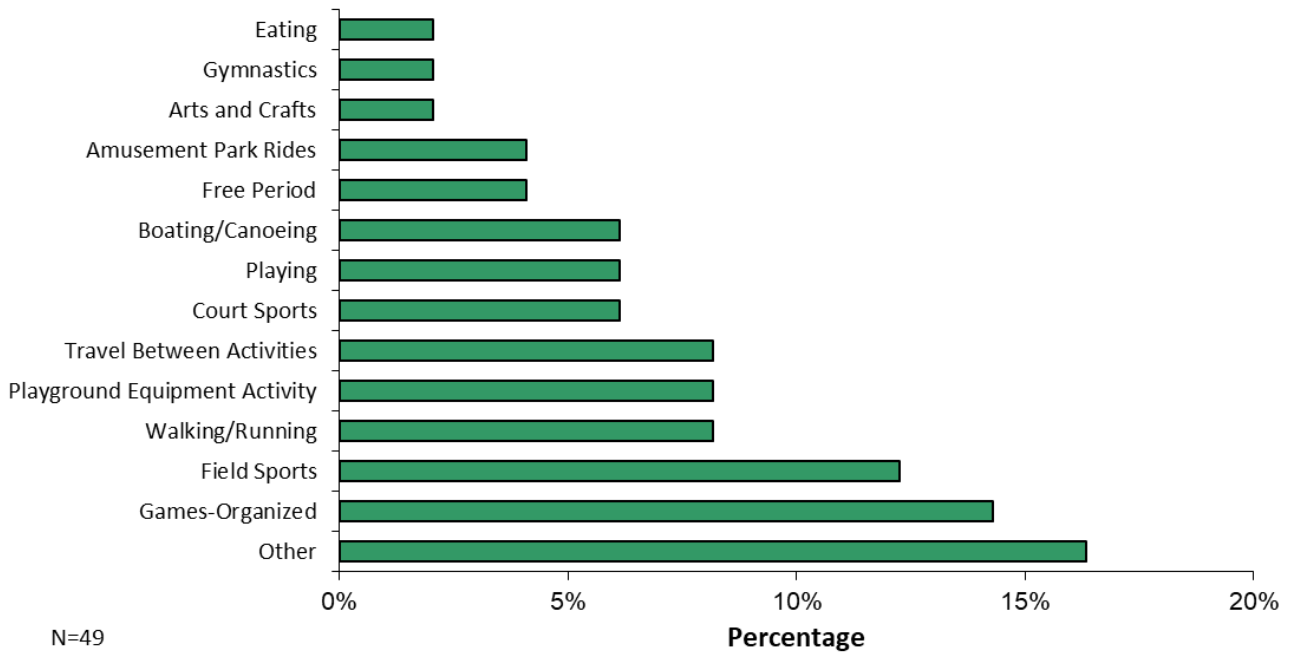
Figure 7: Head Injuries By Type - 2023



N=99

**Requiring sutures, staples, or medical glue

Figure 8: Concussion Injuries by Activity - 2023



N=49

Percentage

Figure 9: Concussion Injuries by Sport and Game Activity - 2023

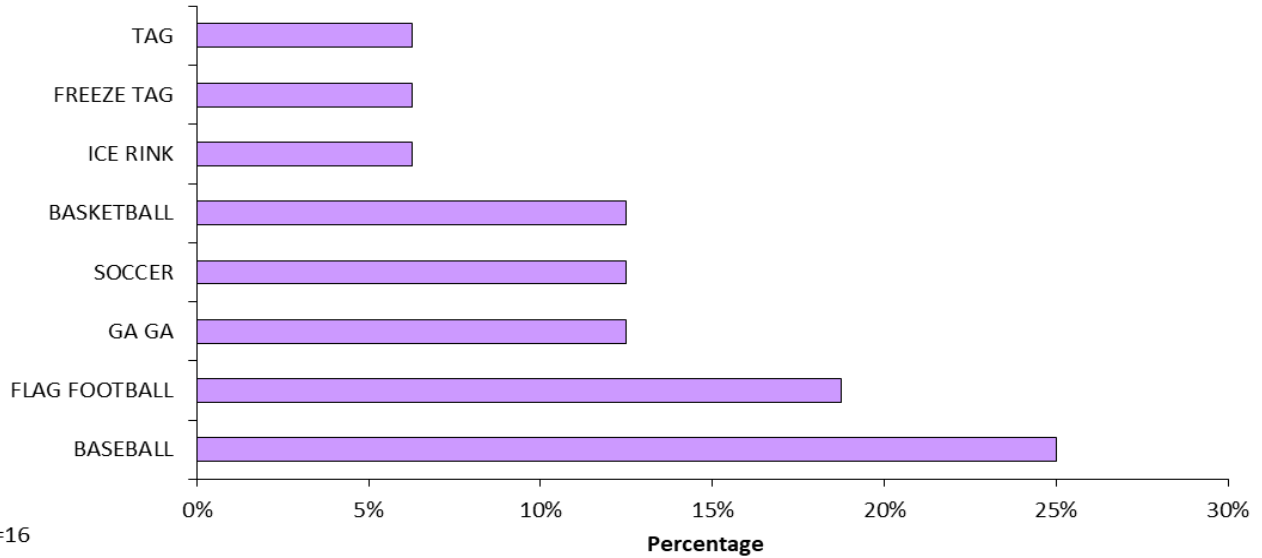


Figure 10: Concussions by Year

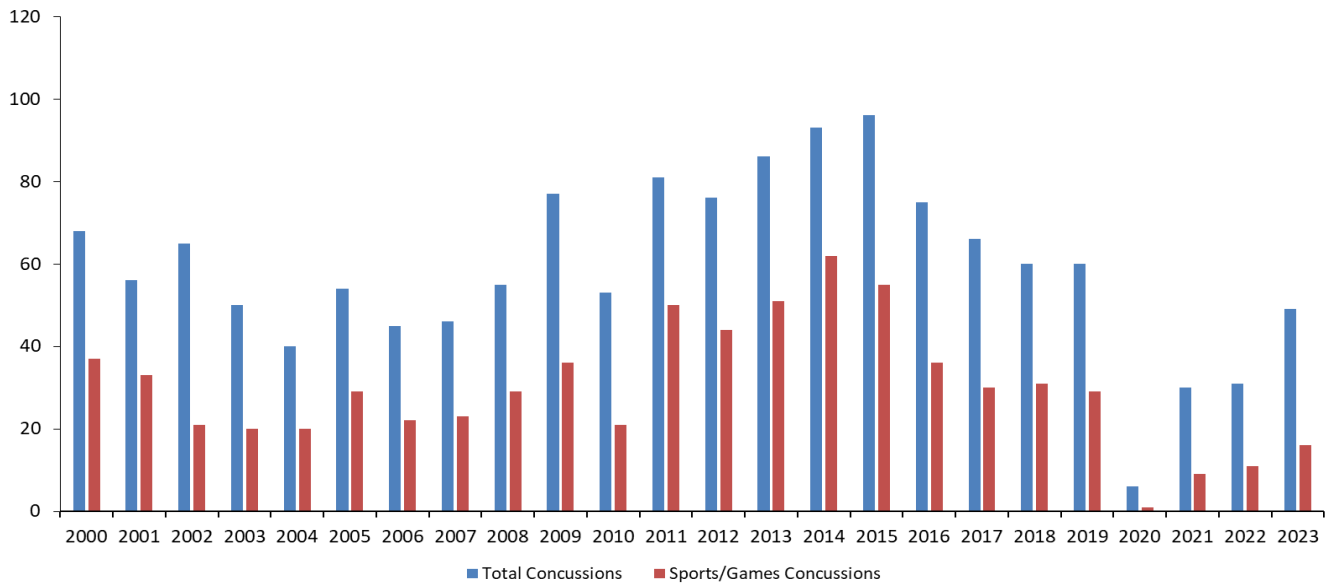


Figure 11: Fractures by Activity - 2023

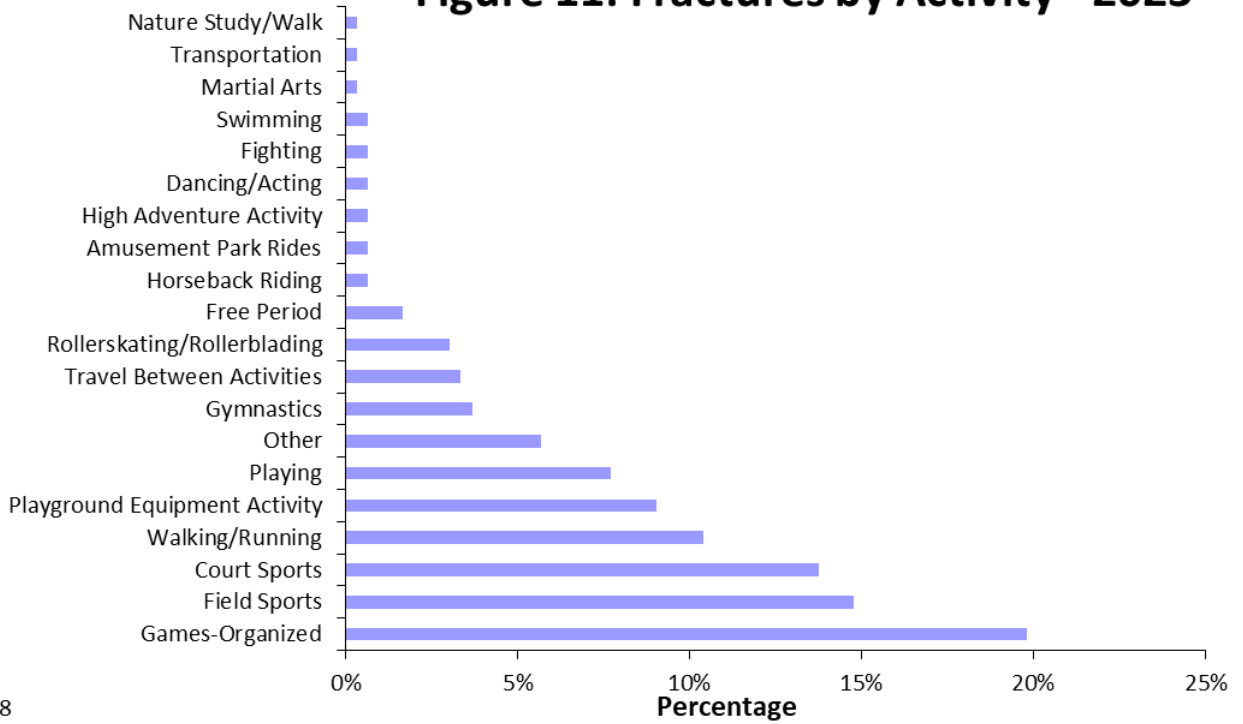


Figure 12: Cuts Requiring Sutures, Staples, or Medical Glue by Activity - 2023

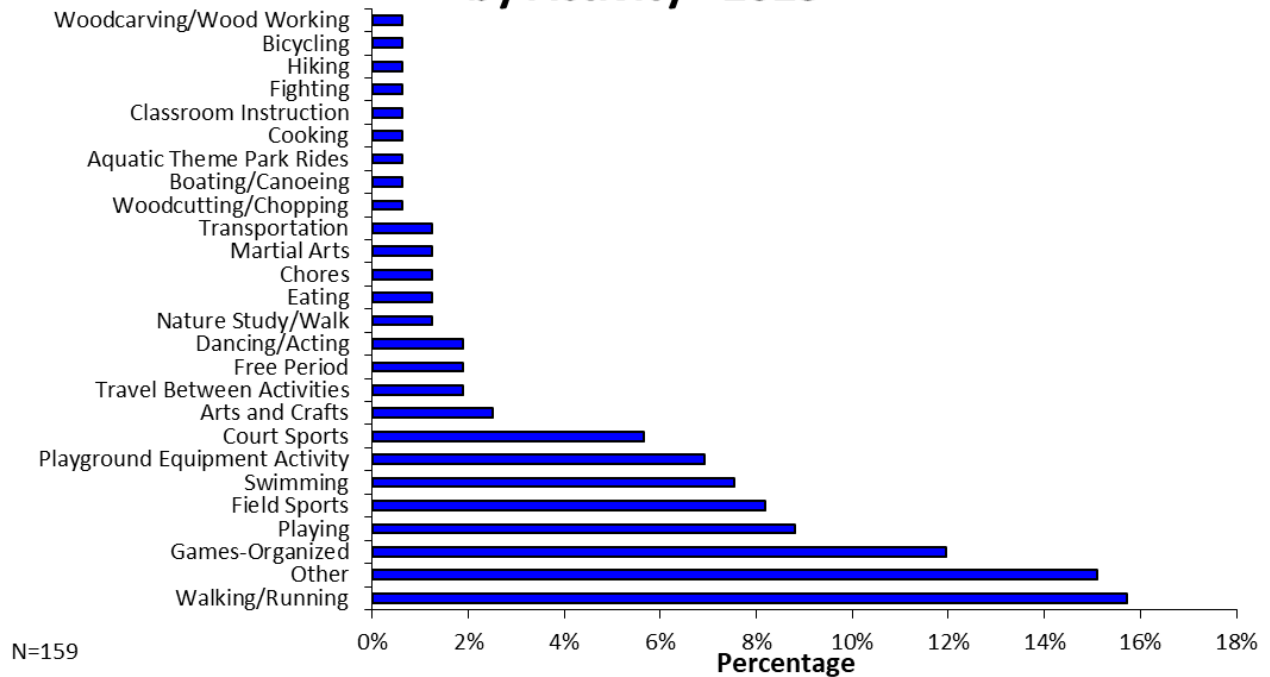
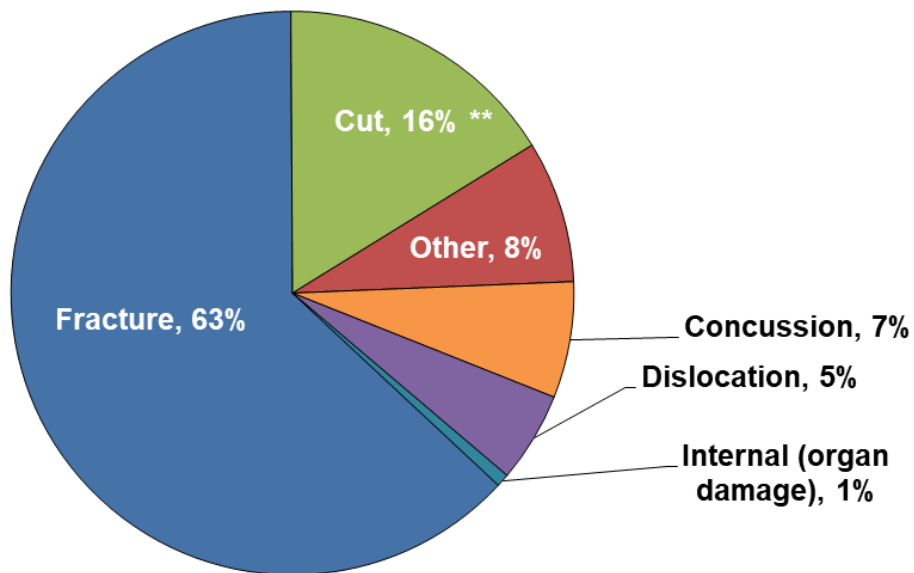


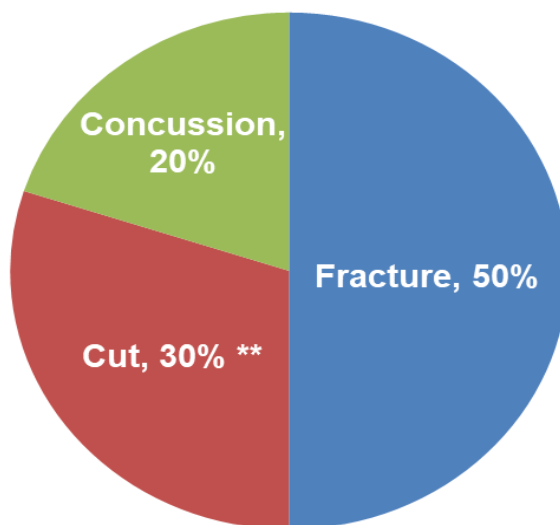
Figure 13: Sports Injuries by Type - 2023



N=135

**Requiring sutures, staples, or medical glue

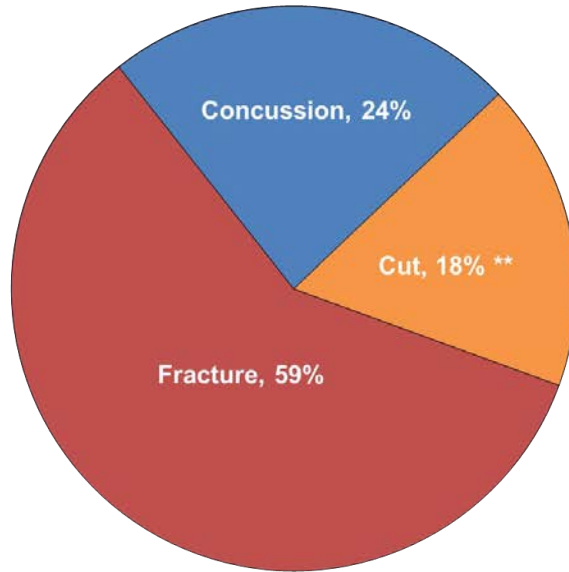
Figure 14: Free Period Injuries by Type - 2023



N=10

**Requiring sutures, staples, or medical glue

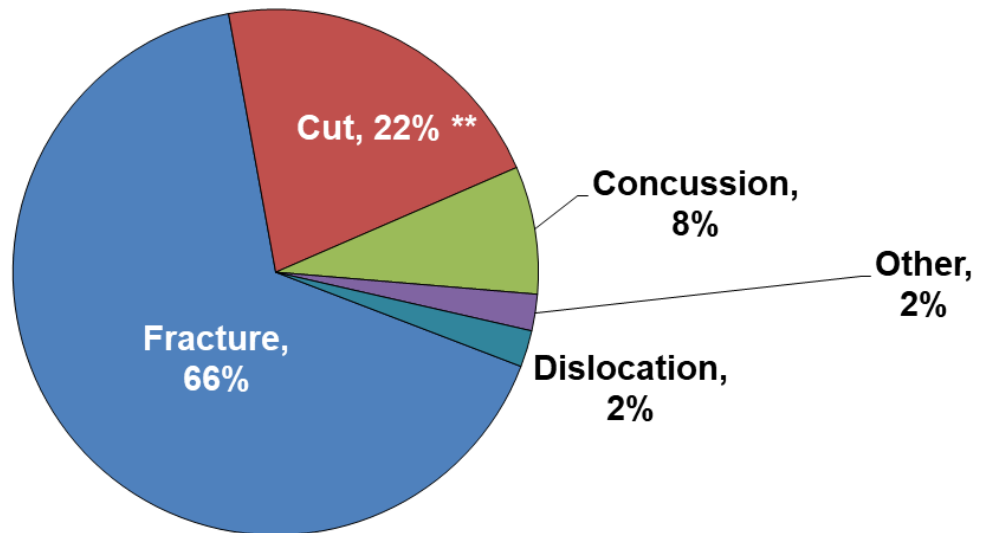
Figure 15: Travel Between Activities Injuries - 2023



N=17

**Requiring sutures, staples, or medical glue

Figure 16: Organized Game Injuries - 2023



N=89

**Requiring sutures, staples, or medical glue

Figure 17: Individual Illnesses - 2023

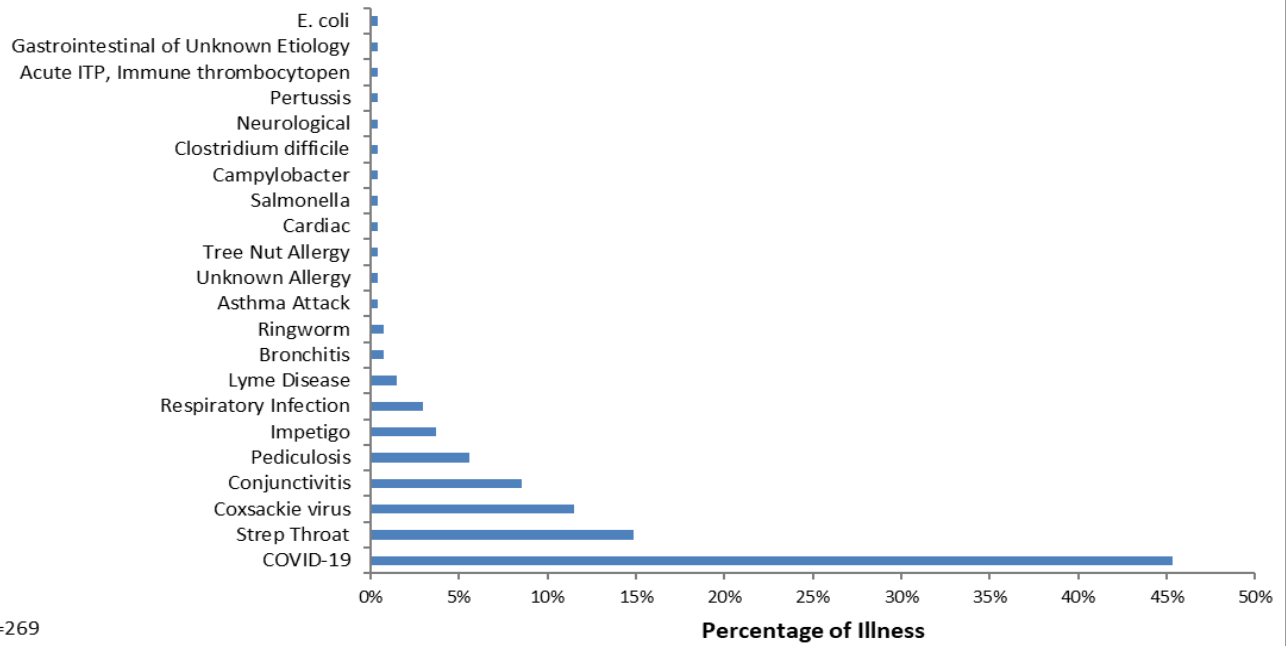


Figure 18: Outbreak Illnesses - 2023

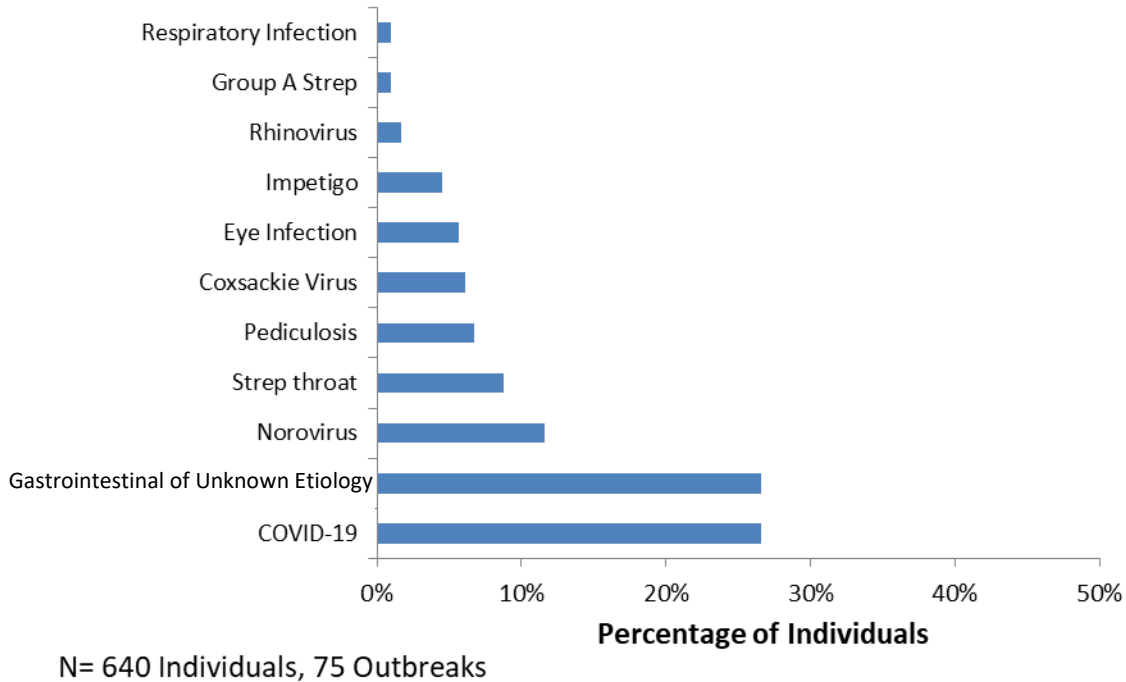


Figure 19: Epi-Pen Administrations by Year

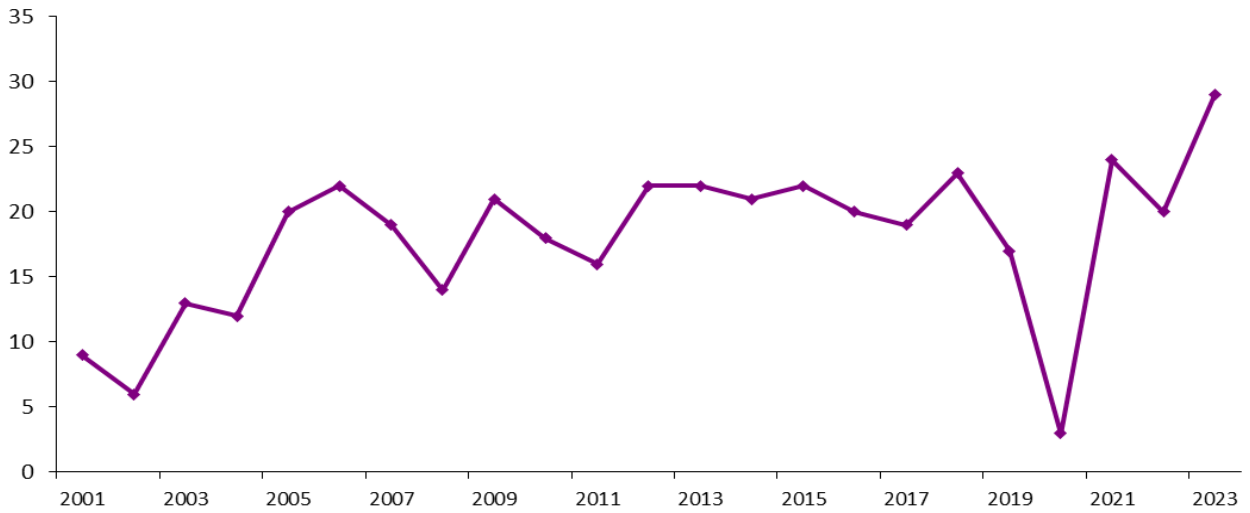


Figure 20: Potential Rabies Exposures by Year

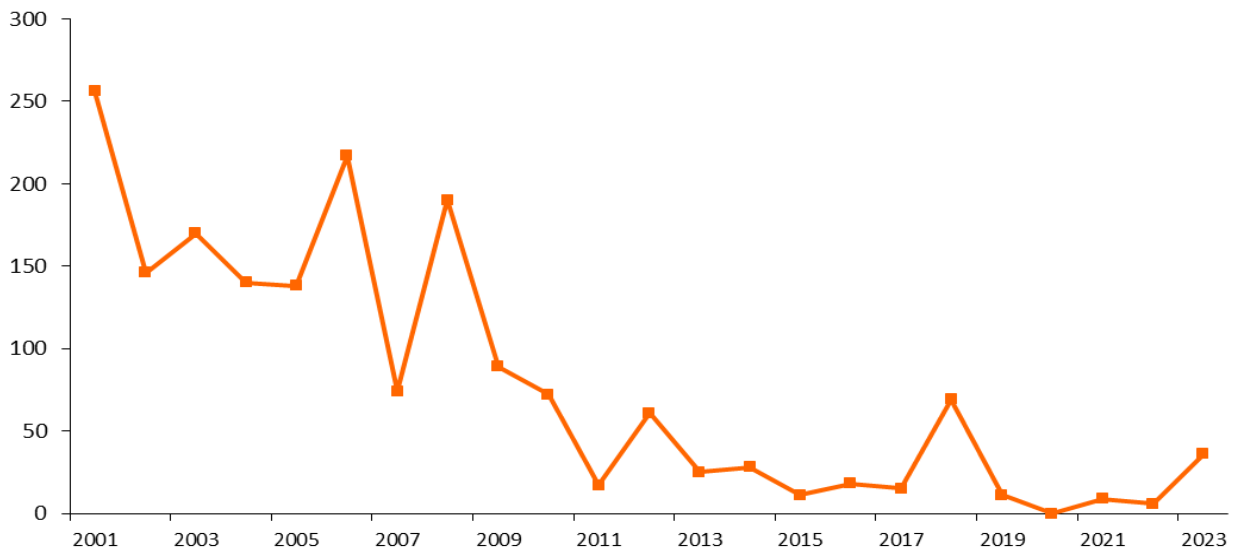
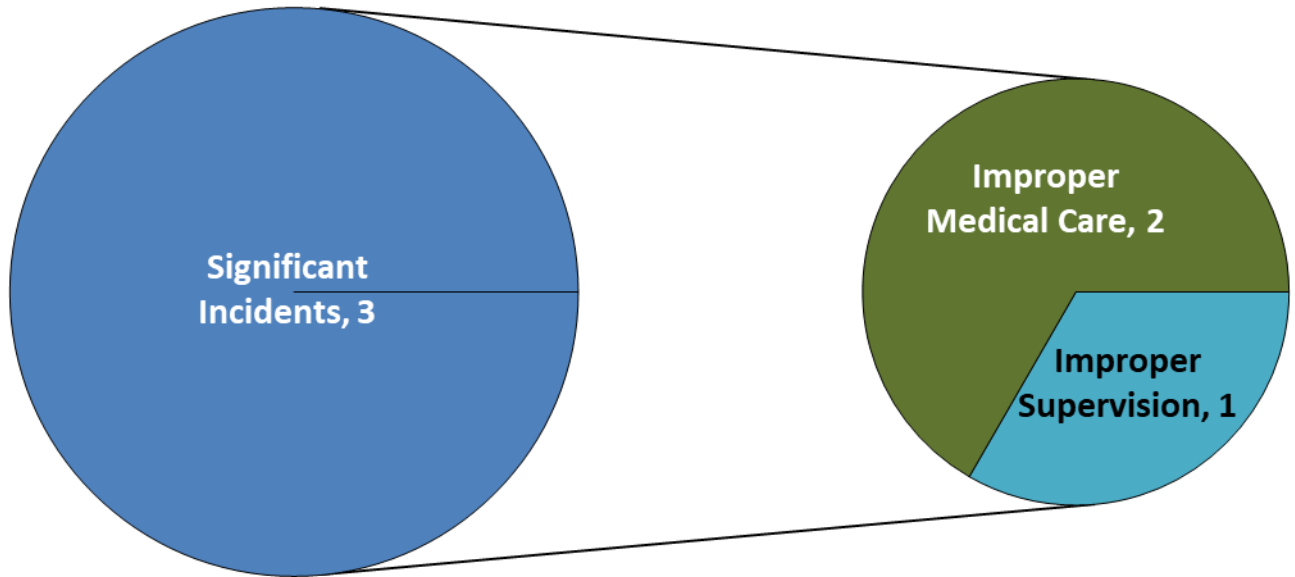


Figure 21: Justice Center Reportable Incidents 2023



There were no reported incidents of Abuse or Neglect in 2023

N=3