INTRODUCTION

Over the period 1996-07, 751 children and young people whose deaths were registered in NSW died in transport related fatalities. Of these deaths, 197 (26%) children died as a pedestrian, 48 (6%) as a pedal cyclist, 365 (49%) as a passenger and 129 (17%) as the vehicle driver.

METHODS

This information has been collected by the NSW Child Death Review Team who provides information about child deaths and aims to prevent or reduce the number of deaths of children from birth to 17 years.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Team’s Trends in Child Deaths in NSW 1996-2005 study published in 2008 has highlighted some concerning figures about the deaths of young drivers aged under 16 years involved in recreational or ‘off-road’ activities.

Of the total 103 children who died, 27 or just over one quarter, of these fatalities occurred in children under 16 and most of these were involved in recreational activities including some at organised events. This included 7 children who were driving either in a quarry, general bushland, on dirt tracks or unsealed roads, 6 who were racing motor bikes or go-carts in an organised motor cross event and 4 who were driving on rural properties.

CONCLUSIONS

While significant efforts have been expended to prevent road trauma and death by many government and non-government organisations, off-road injury and deaths amongst children and young people receives less attention.

The findings of the Child Death Review Team present a compelling case about the need for more effort to be focused in this area to prevent deaths among children aged under 16 years.

REFERENCES