

Snakebite injury

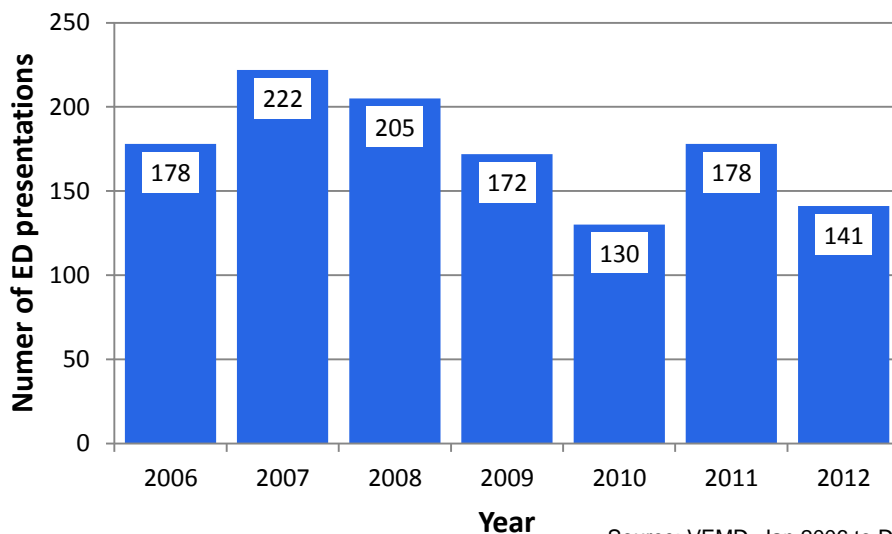
Data supplied by the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit, Monash Injury Research Institute.

Data were selected from the Victorian Emergency Minimum Dataset (VEMD) which is collected from the 39 Victorian hospitals with a 24-hour emergency service. Data quality varies across the hospitals so the counts reported here are underestimates.

Data source: Victorian Emergency Minimum Dataset (VEMD) January 2006 – December 2012 (7 years)
Search Strategy: Injuries associated with snakebite were identified by searching the VEMD for cases using the text term "snake", contained in the 250 character 'Description of Injury Event' field. Selected cases were checked and any irrelevant cases were excluded from the dataset prior to analysis.

Frequency: In the seven years between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2012 there were 1226 snakebite injury emergency department (ED) presentations, an average of 175 per year. Snake bite cases appear to have decreased since 2007.

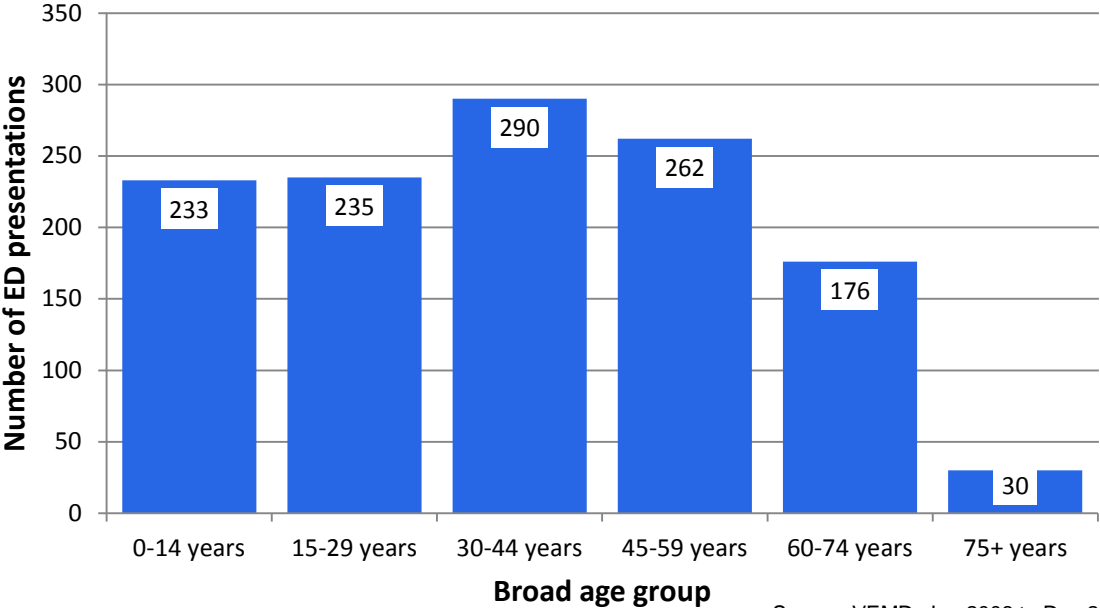
Figure 1 ED presentations for snakebite related injury by year 2006-2012 (n=1226)



Gender: Males (66%) presented more frequently than females (34%).

Age: There was no obvious pattern of injuries related to age group except that snake bite was less frequent from 60 years of age, which is probably related to less frequent exposure.

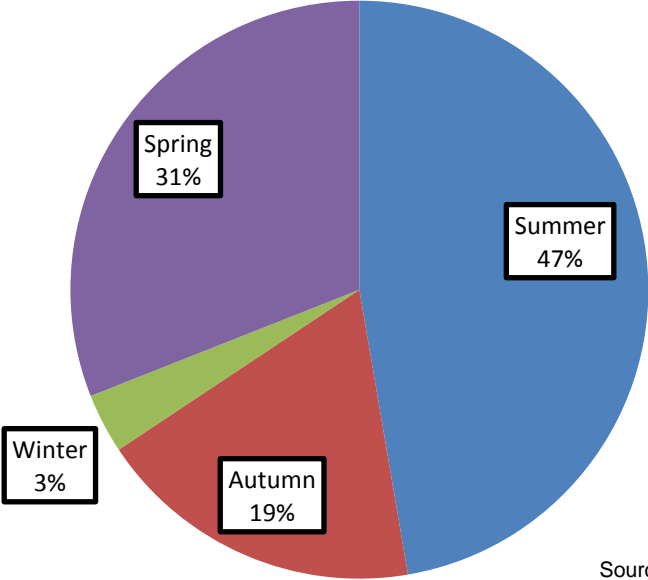
Figure 3 ED presentations related to snakebite by broad age group (n=1226)



Source: VEMD, Jan 2006 to Dec 2012

Time of year: The majority of presentations occurred in the warmer months (Spring and Summer), in particular Summer (47%).

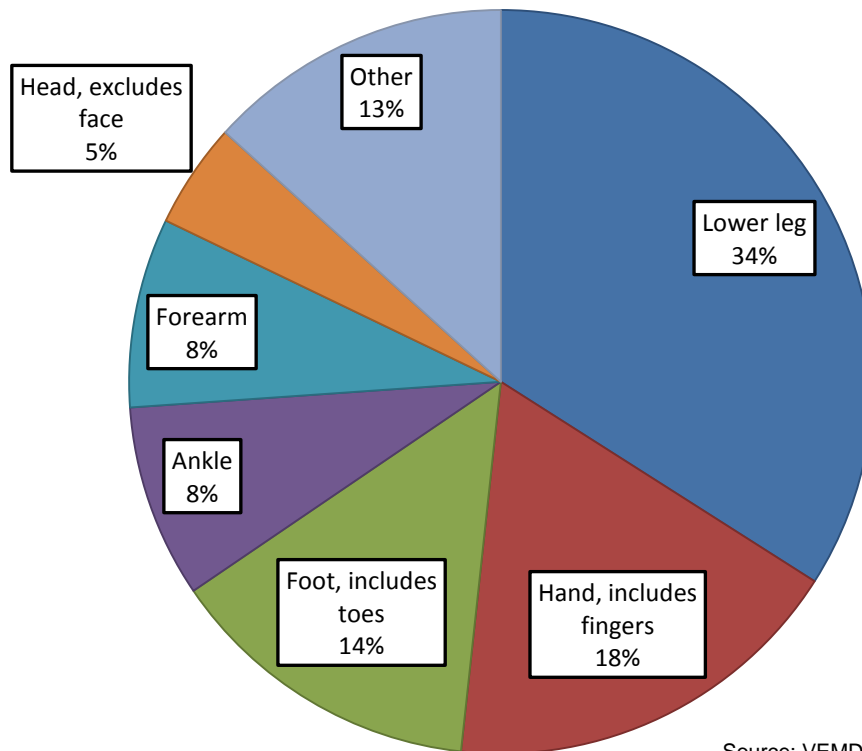
Figure 2 ED presentations for snakebite related injury by season 2006-2012 (n=1226)



Source: VEMD, Jan 2006 to Dec 2012

Body region: The most commonly injured body site was the lower leg (34%), followed by the hand (18%), and foot (14%).

Figure 4 ED presentations for snakebite injury by body region (n=1226)



Source: VEMD, Jan 2006 to Dec 2012

Sample of case narratives:

- *Outside looking for spiders under rocks, found a snake and crushed it with his shoe, picked it up and was bitten*
- *Bringing in bins and black snake under the bin. It wrapped around his leg and bit him on the leg. No first aid applied by patient and he presented 4 hours post bite asymptomatic*
- *Patient wearing thongs to shut up chickens when bitten by brown snake*
- *Protecting dog from snake, snake then bit her*

Safety tips:

- Do not attempt to catch or kill a snake.
- During summer months, avoid riverbanks at dawn and dusk.
- Pay attention to warning signs
- Wear closed in shoes and thick socks if in an area that may be inhabited by snakes.

Many Victorian species of snake are protected species.

Resources: http://www.avru.org/health/health_snakes.html
<http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/snakebite.htm>