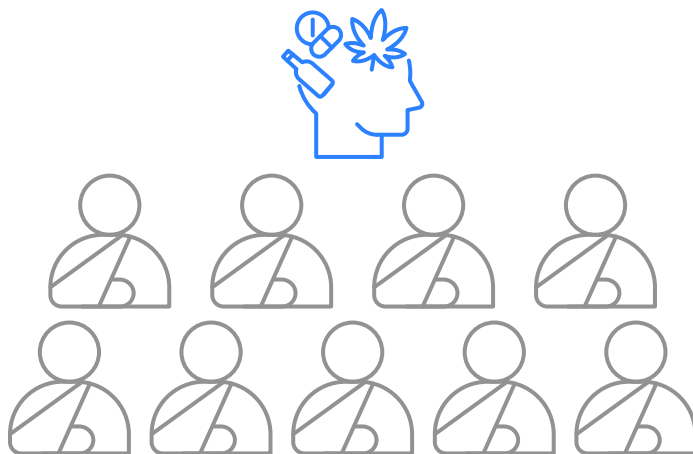


## December 2025 Short Report: Impaired Driving

By Macall Leslie Salewon, MPH, Epidemiologist

### Scope of the Issue in Prehospital Care

Impaired driving is a substantial cause of motor vehicle accidents and fatalities. In 2023 in the United States, one person was killed in a crash due to impaired driving from alcohol every 42 minutes.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, over 50% of drivers seriously injured in crashes tested positive for alcohol and/or drugs in a study of over 7,000 patients from 7 Level 1 trauma centers across the U.S.<sup>2</sup> Despite these serious risks for drivers and those around them, approximately 1 million arrests are made each year for impaired driving and self-reported surveys indicate close to 127 million US adults drove while alcohol-impaired in 2020.<sup>3</sup>

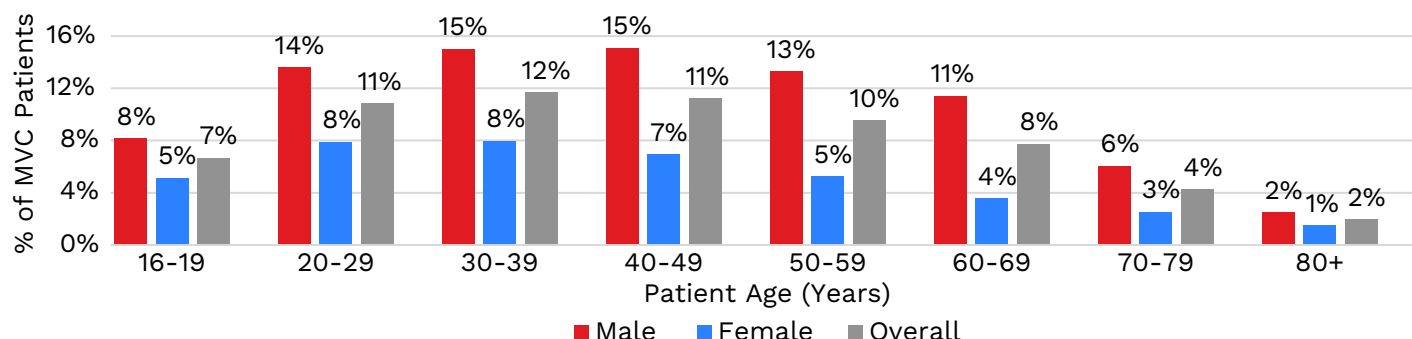


Approximately **1 in 10** patients in 911-responses to motor vehicle crashes (MVCs) had indications of alcohol and/or drug use (n=32,817)

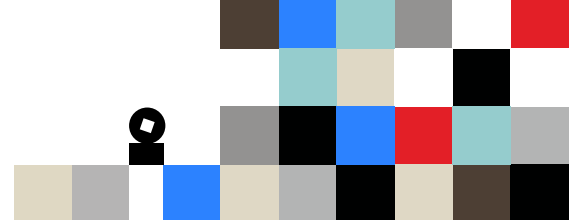
### Who

- Twice as many male MVC patients had indications of alcohol and/or drug use compared to female MVC patients (**13%** vs. **6%** of MVCs)
- Indications of alcohol and/or drug use were most frequent in MVC patients aged 20-49 years old

### Proportion of MVC Patients with Indicators of Alcohol and/or Drug Use by Age and Gender



# ImageTrend Short Report

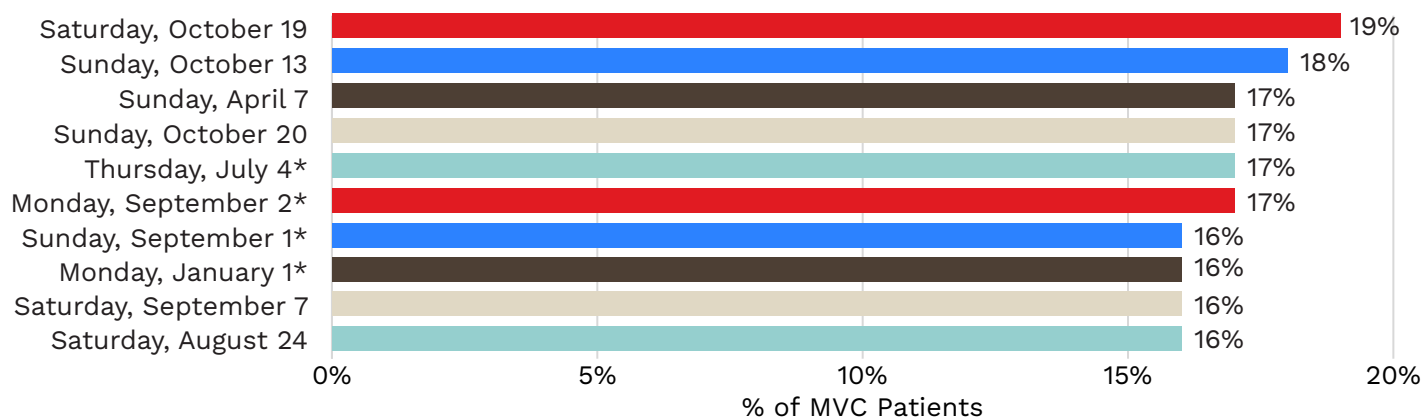


## When

- Approximately **1 in 3** patients from MVCs that occurred during the early morning hours had indications of alcohol and/or drug use
- Of MVCs with patients who had indications of alcohol and/or drug use, **40%** occurred between 6 pm on Friday evenings and 6 am on Sunday mornings

		Day of Week						
		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Time of Day		16%	9%	8%	8%	9%	10%	15%
0:00-2:59	38%	45%	33%	28%	31%	35%	37%	41%
3:00-5:59	20%	36%	15%	12%	12%	13%	15%	32%
6:00-8:59	5%	12%	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	8%
9:00-11:59	5%	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%	5%	6%
12:00-14:59	6%	7%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	7%
15:00-17:59	7%	10%	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	10%
18:00-20:59	13%	15%	12%	12%	12%	12%	13%	17%
21:00-23:59	22%	21%	19%	20%	21%	22%	24%	26%

## % of MVC Patients with Indications of Alcohol and/or Drug Use, Top 10 Days in 2024

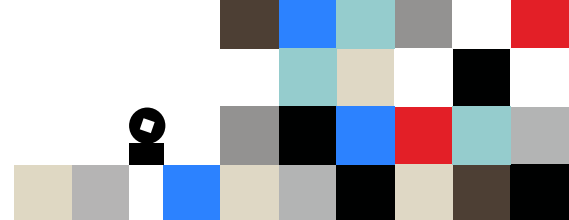


\*Federal holiday or holiday weekend

## Transport Decisions

- 90%** of MVC patients with indications of alcohol and/or drug use were transported by EMS compared to **78%** of those without
- 6%** of MVC patients with indications of alcohol and/or drug use refused transport against medical advice compared to **13%** of those without

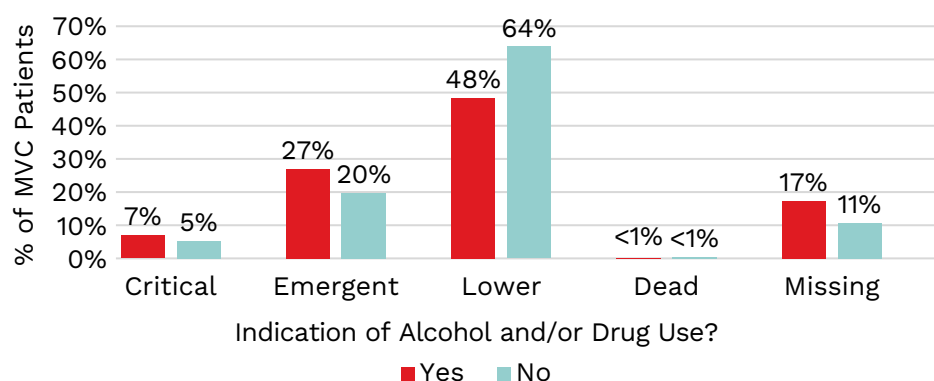
# ImageTrend Short Report



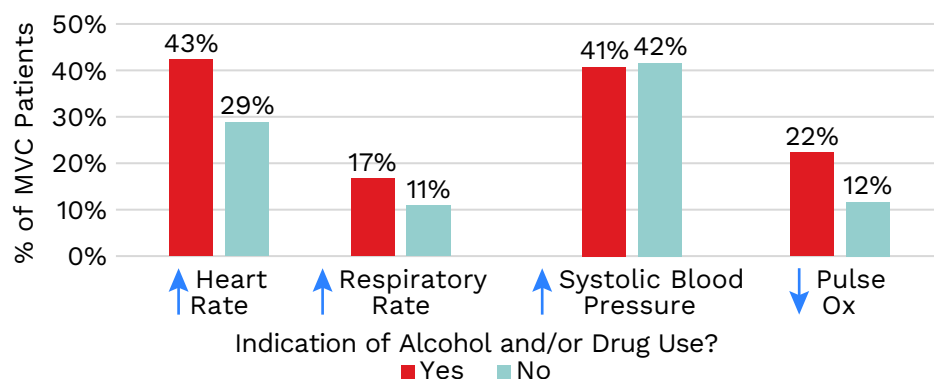
## Clinical Factors

- MVC patients with indicators of alcohol and/or drug use were more frequently critical or emergent in acuity than those without
- Higher proportion of abnormal GCS scores (**21% vs 8%**)
- Slightly higher proportion of Severe Trauma Triage Criteria (**6% vs 4%**)

### Initial Acuity by Indication of Alcohol and/or Drug Use



### Abnormal Vitals by Indication of Alcohol and/or Drug Use



**About the data:** This analysis was conducted using the ImageTrend Collaborate™ dataset, a representative national EMS research resource<sup>4</sup> consisting of de-identified data from agencies that opt into data-sharing. MVC cases were identified using criteria developed for the Transportation Incident Visualization (TIV) dashboard<sup>4</sup> and indicators of alcohol and/or drug use were identified using eHistory17 and relevant ICD-10 codes in eSituation09-12. *Note: This data cannot identify whether patients who did not have documented indicators of alcohol and/or drug use were in a collision caused by an impaired driver.*

#### Citations:

- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Risky Driving: Drunk Driving. <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving>. Accessed December 9, 2025.
- Thomas, FD, et. al. 2022. Drug prevalence among seriously or fatally injured road users (Report No. DOT HS 813 399). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Impaired Driving Facts. <https://tinyurl.com/7ywynd8t>. Updated May 16, 2024. Accessed December 9, 2025.
- ImageTrend. Transportation Incident Visualization Companion Guide. <https://tinyurl.com/3und25k5>

## Call to Action

- Time trends: awareness of local events/holidays that may influence alcohol consumption in your community for EMS resource management
- Advocate for safe driving practices in your community: emphasize the impact and risk of impaired driving in collaboration with other local organizations
- Increase clinician awareness of how alcohol or drug intoxication may impact the physiology and cognition of acutely injured patients
- Recognize when an intoxicated patient's behavior may affect clinician safety and have plans for de-escalation and response support (i.e., local law enforcement)

#### Work With Us:

ImageTrend's Clinical & Research Services team partners with EMS and healthcare organizations to uncover actionable insights and drive data-informed public health initiatives.

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[> Learn more about participating in or conducting research with the ImageTrend Collaborate Dataset here:](#)

