Wisconsin Department of Health Services:
Bureau of Community Health Promotions
Injury & Violence Prevention Program, Pedestrian Safety

Injury and Violence Prevention Program
1 West Wilson
Madison, WI 53701
http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/injuryprevention/index.htm

About this Organization:

The Injury and Violence Prevention Program (IVPP) is a small public health unit that contributes to the mission of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services -- to support economic prosperity and quality of life through the protection and promotion of health and safety-by investigating the underlying causes of injury and violence and identifying opportunities for prevention. To do so, IVPP conducts surveillance, analyzes data, reports to the public, develops interventions, and evaluates impacts in the field of injury and violence prevention.

The large burden of injury in Wisconsin emphasizes the need for sustained public health efforts in this area. Injury is the leading cause of death for people ages 1-46 and the leading cause of years of potential life lost (YPLL) before age 65. Broadly defined, injury includes unintentional injuries, such as falls, burns, overdose and transportation related injuries, and intentional injuries, such as homicide, suicide, and sexual assault. The diverse array of topics addressed by the Injury and Violence Prevention Program presents numerous fascinating opportunities for students to explore individual interests while impacting a critical area of public health through population health-based approaches.

Project Opportunities 2015

Motor vehicle crash data analysis and disparities in pedestrian safety

In many states, cities and towns, pedestrian safety is becoming a much higher road safety priority. Even at the Federal level, the Secretary of Transportation has announced a new initiative to enhance pedestrian safety. However, these efforts rarely focus on economically disadvantaged areas which have approximately double the pedestrian fatality rates of wealthier communities. Recent additions to key datasets in Wisconsin have created an interesting opportunity to explore, analyze and understand crash data particularly as it relates to racial disparity.

The project would consist of two separate but related components. Each component could be performed separately or concurrently, as time and scheduling allows.

1. OBSERVATIONAL FIELD STUDY

The observational component would involve replicating a small Portland study here in Madison. The study, entitled “Racial Bias in Driver Yielding Behavior at Crosswalks”, tested the hypothesis that some drivers’ behavior may reflect racial bias resulting in differential behavior toward Black and White pedestrians. This was tested in a controlled field experiment at an un-signalized midblock crosswalk. The results (90 pedestrian trials, 168 driver-subjects) indicated that Black pedestrians were passed by
twice as many cars and experienced wait times that were 32% longer than White pedestrians.

2. **SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS**
The second component consists of secondary data analysis using previously linked hospital and crash data from the CODES data system. Crash injury data now has an additional race variable in Wisconsin. This coupled with available demographic and crash detail of the crash report can prove very useful for conducting a race specific burden of injury report for pedestrian (and other) injury Wisconsin.

This is a great opportunity to be involved in both a data oriented project and a field study experience, while exploring, understanding and reporting on novel issues and findings around racial disparity in this important and timely injury area.

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