

Data Details - Climate and Health

Interpreting the Data

What these data tell us:

- These data can be used to determine number and rate (crude and age-adjusted) of individuals hospitalized and who visited the Emergency Department with a primary diagnosis of heat related illness by State and County.
- These data can be used to determine number and crude rate of heat related mortalities by State.

What these data do not tell us:

- These data only represent SC hospitalizations and ED Visits. In order to get a true representation of SC residents treated for heat related illnesses, you would also need to determine the number of individuals seeking care outside SC.
- These data are not true prevalence rates of individuals with heat related illnesses in SC. These data are hospital discharge and ED visit rates. Not all individuals in SC with heat related illnesses will have a hospitalization and/or ED visit and some individuals with heat related illnesses may have multiple hospitalizations and/or ED visits.

Limitations of the data

It does not include all heat related illness cases. Reporting rates at the county level is a relatively broad measure. These data will not show true heat related illness burden at a more local level, such as the city level.

About these measurements

Measures included

South Carolina heat related illness hospitalization and ED visit data are presented in two ways:

1. the number (frequency) of individuals hospitalized and have ED visits in SC for heat related illness
2. the number (frequency) and rate (crude and age-adjusted) of individuals hospitalized and have ED visits in SC for heat related illness

Frequency of Measurement

SC hospitalization and ED visit data are collected monthly by The SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office from all acute care hospitals in South Carolina and annual discharges and rates are reported.

Interpretation of rates

A hospitalization and ED visit rate should be interpreted as the number of heat related illnesses diagnosed for every 10,000 population in South Carolina. For example, a rate of 1.3 for heat related illness in 2005 can be interpreted as: “Out of every 10,000 people in South Carolina in 2005, 1.3 were diagnosed with a heat related illness. The state level heat mortality rate is for every 100,000 population in South Carolina.

Calculation Methods

Annual number and percentage of individuals hospitalized for heat related illness

The number of heat related hospitalizations during the selected year in a selected county, divided by the population of the selected county for that year.

Example:

$$\frac{\text{Heat related hospitalization in 2010 for Richland County}}{\text{Richland County Population Estimate for 2010}}$$

Annual number and percentage of individuals with an ED visit for heat related illness

The number of ED visits during the selected year in a selected county, divided by the population of the selected county for that year.

Example:

Heat related ED visits in 2010 for Richland County
Richland County Population Estimate for 2010