

Written Testimony by DogsBite.org

DogsBite.org is 501(c)(3) nonprofit dog bite victims' organization dedicated to reducing serious dog attacks.

Senate Local Government Committee

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Opposition to Senate Bill 5094

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[Characteristics of 1616 Consecutive Dog Bite Injuries at a Single Institution](#), by Michael S. Golinko, MD, MA, Brian Arslanian, MD2, and Joseph K. Williams, MD, FAAP, *Clinical Pediatrics*, July 2016

[Dog bites of the head and neck: an evaluation of a common pediatric trauma and associated treatment](#), by Daniel C. O'Brien, BS, Tyler B. Andre, MD, Aaron D. Robinson, MD, Lane D. Squires, MD and Travis T. Tollefson, MD, MPH, *American Journal of Otolaryngology*, January-February 2015.

[Mortality, Mauling, and Maiming by Vicious Dogs](#), by John K. Bini, MD, Stephen M. Cohn, MD, Shirley M. Acosta, RN, Marilyn J. McFarland, RN, MS, Mark T. Muir, MD and Joel E. Michalek, PhD; for the TRISAT Clinical Trials Group, *Annals of Surgery*, April 2011 - Volume 253 - Issue 4 - p 791-797



DogsBite.org

DogsBite.org is a national dog bite victims' group dedicated to reducing serious dog attacks. Through our work, we hope to protect both people and pets from future attacks. Our website contains a wide collection of data to help policy-makers and citizens learn about dangerous dogs. Our research focuses on pit bull type dogs. Due to selective breeding practices that emphasize aggression and tenacity, this class of dogs negatively impacts communities the most.

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Summary of Key Peer-Reviewed Medical Studies (2011-2016)

There are nearly a dozen peer-reviewed medical studies published in medical science publications since 2011 that show similar results in retrospective reviews of level I trauma centers for dog bite injuries. Their findings show a higher frequency of pit bull injuries than other breeds of dogs. The majority of these studies also found that compared with attacks by other breeds of dogs, attacks by pit bulls are associated to a higher severity of injuries and higher hospital charges. This is a growing body of studies. Doctors continue to find these same shared results.

For brevity we are including three recent key studies. The first, Characteristics of 1616 Consecutive Dog Bite Injuries at a Single Institution (2016), is a 4-year review of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA), the only pediatric level I trauma center in Georgia. The study refers back to eight different medical studies (starting in 2000). Their findings are consistent with six of them regarding pit bull injuries compared to other dog breeds: higher frequency, higher severity and higher costs.

Our data confirm what detractors of the breed and child advocates suggest—that, with rare exceptions, children and pit bulls do not mix well. Of the 8 studies listed in Table 5, 6 report pit bulls as the most prevalent breed, and in many cases, they inflicted the most severe injuries. A large study at Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania showed that over a 12-year period, 25% of injuries were caused by a pit bull, and two-thirds of those required an operation. Our data were consistent with others, in that an operative intervention was more than 3 times as likely to be associated with a pit bull injury than with any other breed. Half of the operations performed on children in this study as well as the only mortality resulted from a pit bull injury. Our data revealed that pit bull breeds were more than 2.5 times as likely as other breeds to bite in multiple anatomical locations. Although other breeds may bite with the same or higher frequency, the injury that a pit bull inflicts per bite is often more severe. Consistent with these findings is that of Bini et al, who reported on 228 patients and found that attacks by pit bulls resulted in a higher injury severity score, lower Glasgow coma score, higher risk of death, and higher hospital charges than attacks by any other breed.

The second study, Dog Bites of the Head and Neck: An Evaluation of a Common Pediatric Trauma and Associated Treatment (2015), is a review of 334 dog bite cases from the University of California Davis Medical Center, a level I trauma center in Sacramento. The study shows a higher frequency of pit bull injuries, a higher degree of severity injuries -- 5 times the relative rate of surgical interventions -- compared to

other dog breeds. The authors also state, “The key finding from our second objective, determining the dogs responsible for bites, is the importance of pit bull terriers in patients with dog bites of the head and neck. The findings of this study are consistent with and extend from previous publications [5,7,11–13,16,21,22,29].”

Results: *334 unique dog bites were identified, of which 101 involved the head and neck. The mean patient age was 15.1 ± 18.1 years. Of the more than 8 different breeds identified, one-third were caused by pit bull terriers and resulted in the highest rate of consultation (94%) and had 5 times the relative rate of surgical intervention. Unlike all other breeds, pit bull terriers were relatively more likely to attack an unknown individual (+31%), and without provocation (+48%). Injuries of the head and neck had an average follow-up of 1.26 ± 2.4 visits, and average specialty follow-up of 3.1 ± 3.5 visits.*

Conclusions: *The patients most likely to suffer dog bite injuries of the head and neck are children. Although a number of dog breeds were identified, the largest group were pit bull terriers, whose resultant injuries were more severe and resulted from unprovoked, unknown dogs. More severe injuries required a greater number of interventions, a greater number of inpatient physicians, and more outpatient follow-up encounters.*

The final study, Mortality, Mauling, and Maiming by Vicious Dogs (2011), is a retrospective review of all dog bite cases admitted into the level I trauma center at University Hospital San Antonio from 1994 to 2009 and treated by the Trauma and Emergency Surgery Service. The examination of these cases showed that compared to attacks by other breeds of dogs, attacks by pit bulls had a higher degree of severity of injury, higher median hospital charges and a higher risk of death.

Results: *Our Trauma and Emergency Surgery Services treated 228 patients with dog bite injuries; for 82 of those patients, the breed of dog involved was recorded (29 were injured by pit bulls). Compared with attacks by other breeds of dogs, attacks by pit bulls were associated with a higher median Injury Severity Scale score (4 vs. 1; $P = 0.002$), a higher risk of an admission Glasgow Coma Scale score of 8 or lower (17.2% vs. 0%; $P = 0.006$), higher median hospital charges (\$10,500 vs. \$7200; $P = 0.003$), and a higher risk of death (10.3% vs. 0%; $P = 0.041$).*

Conclusions: *Attacks by pit bulls are associated with higher morbidity rates, higher hospital charges, and a higher risk of death than are attacks by other breeds of dogs. Strict regulation of pit bulls may substantially reduce the US mortality rates related to dog bites.*