

Crime Observatory Newsletter

"No Violence - Jus' Bat for Peace"

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Impact of Violence on the Emergency Room of KPH

Held on February 7, 2007 the Crime Observatory hosted its third meeting at the Police Officer's Club. In attendance were over twenty persons representing various sectors of the society including the police, private and public sector/governmental organizations and community based organizations.

Dr. Hugh Wong, a medical officer at the Kingston Public Hospital (KPH) delivered his presentation on the *Impact of Violence on the Emergency Room of the Kingston Public Hospital*. He started out by highlighting that the KPH is the primary Government institution treating trauma patients in Jamaica. According to the statistics he presented, KPH had seen 50,270 patients during the year 2006 and of that figure, 18,025 were admitted representing 36% of the total number seen.

Of the 1269 gunshot wounds (representing 2.5% of total visits) that KPH treated for the year 2006, the most cases were seen in November (157). In terms of motor vehicle accidents, a total of 1235 (2.5% of total visits) victims were treated for the same year and the highest number were seen in the month of April (143). Fifty-three percent of total visits were due to lacerations which amounted to 2885.

With regards to deaths, 133 persons died in the department and 712 died on arrival.

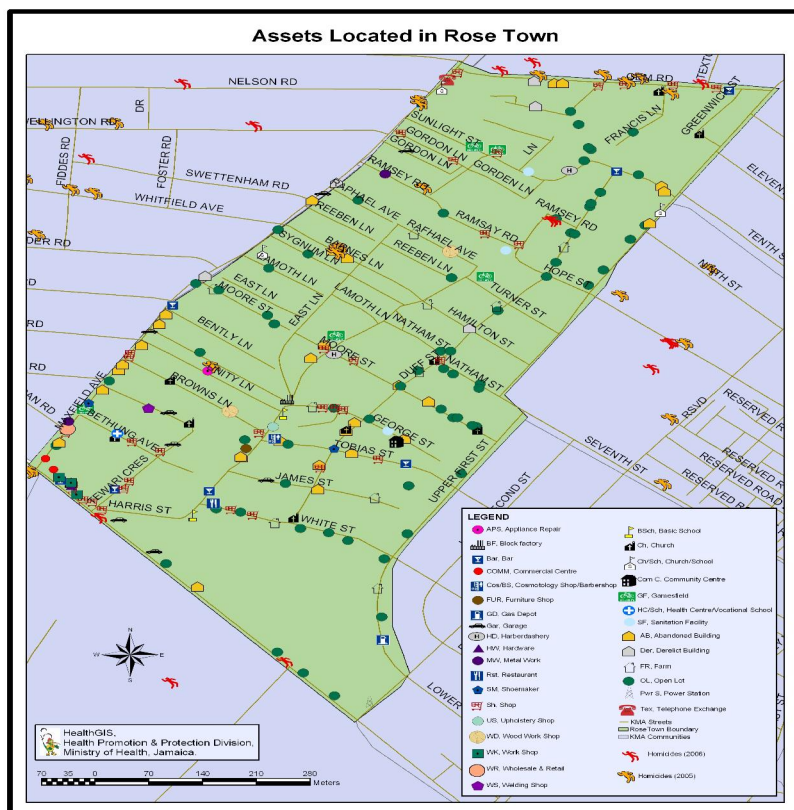
Furthermore, 2885 minor operations (suturing of lacerations) were conducted for the year.

In comparing statistics from the Emergency Rooms in the U.S. to that of KPH in the year 2002, it was highlighted that violence related injuries represented 1.5% of total visits in the U.S. and 10% at KPH. Similarly, cut/stab wounds accounted for 30.6% of visits in the U.S. Emergency Rooms and 52% at KPH and for gun shot wounds, 5% in the U.S. and 8% at KPH.

Of notable significance in difference was one particular place of occurrence of injury in the U.S., 9% of injuries that

are seen in Emergency Rooms occurred on the street while at KPH it was 52%

The direct impact violence has on the Emergency Room of KPH, according to Dr. Wong are as follows: (1) increased workload (2) overcrowding of the Emergency Room (3) use of doctors solely to suture (4) increased risk of transmission of blood borne viruses due to the "bloody" nature of injuries (5) transfer of resources from



Map of Rose Town highlighting all the assets within the various communities that constitute that particular geographic region as well as homicide cases for the years 2005 and 2006. It was prepared by the GIS Officers of the Health Promotion and Protection Division of the Ministry of Health.

patients with less dramatic presentations but with possibly more serious illnesses and (6) increased risk of violence within the Emergency Room since often the "combatants" and their supporters are present in there at the same time.

It was recommended that further work should be done in selecting a hospital in a U.S. city with a high homicide rate to compare with KPH.

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Community Safety/Policing

"community policing has great potential to reduce crime and fear..."

"...importance to community safety is the idea of improving and developing trust, confidence and communications between citizens and the police"

"at least 2 officers will be placed in each police division..."

Advocates for community oriented policing contend that it has great potential to reduce crime and fear because it strengthens community social organization and cohesion. According to Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) John McLean, community safety can be achieved through community policing. Community safety, as noted by him, is a very broad concept which extends beyond traditional concerns about crime and crime prevention, and encompass fear of crime and other issues which affects people and communities such as road, fire and water safety and safety in the home

and at work.

He further stated that if the police works together with other public sector agencies, voluntary and non-governmental agencies and communities to identify and address community concerns and problems, a great deal more can be achieved than if they work in isolation.

Of particular importance to community safety he noted is the idea of improving and developing further trust, confidence and communications between citizens and the police. In Grants Pen, this bond is already strong, however, it is lacking in many other inner-city communi-

ties. This he believes can be achieved through community policing across the island.

At least 2 officers will be placed in each police division charged with making sure, on behalf of their Divisional Commander, that community safety is executed on the ground. These officers will be trained and given responsibility for physical crime prevention in their Division.

Recommendations that were made include generating a timeline to sustain community policing in police divisions and planning community policing seminars/workshops with all the relevant stakeholders.

Crime Statistics Update

In comparing data from 2005 to 2006 as presented by Supt. Hewitt of the Kingston Western Division, there was a 67% decrease in murder, 66% decrease in shooting, a 24% increase in robbery, 8% increase in rape, 13% increase in carnal abuse, 89% decrease in breaking and larceny remained the same for both years; only two cases each.

Dissecting the murder data further, 21 cases were reported in December of 2006 compared to December in the previous year where 5 cases were reported.

For both years, most murders were committed on Fridays; 18 in 2006 and 19 in 2005. The least murders were committed on Sunday in 2006 (six) and on

Saturday for 2005 (ten).

In terms of types of weapons used to commit murders in 2006, ten were committed by knives, one by a machete, five by blunt instruments, fifty-four by hand guns and ten by unknown weapons.

In 2006, most murders were committed during the "critical period", 8-12pm.

Upcoming Events

- "Learning for Life" Launch on February 15, 2007 in Rose Town
- Monthly Crime Observatory meeting on March 6, 2007 commencing at 9:30 am sharp

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Violence Prevention Alliance Peace Campaign Launch

On February 6, 2007, the birthday of Reggae Legendary Bob Marley, the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) launched its Peace Campaign under the theme "No Violence-Jus' Bat for Peace". According to VPA Chairman Professor Barry Chevannes, the activities which will culminate on Peace Day, March 7, 2007, are specifically aimed towards "promoting peace at the community level through cricket competitions, using the staging of the ICC Cricket World Cup as is reflected in our slogan". There will be three one thousand person peace marches as well as a special concert to be held at Vauxhall High School at 8:00 am. Additionally, there will be a Peace Day Sunday Service on March 4th at various churches as well as community activities throughout the month.

We're on the Web!
www.moh.gov.jm/vpa/index.htm