**All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Injuries**

Although statistics on the incidence of spinal cord injuries specifically due to all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use are not available, the recent injury to former Olympic swimmer, Amy Van Dyken, has brought to public attention injuries related to these popular forms of recreational vehicles.

ATVs, with their oversize, low pressure tires, are designed for off-road use and have become increasingly popular by outdoor lovers for recreational use. Unfortunately, as its popularity and use have dramatically increased, so has the number of injuries associated with its use.

According to a study published by Sawyer et al. in the Journal of the AAOS, the number of annual ATV-related injuries in the U.S. in-creased from 10,100 in 1982 to over 150,000 in 2007 with fatalities per year increasing from 29 in 1982 to 766 in 2007. The authors reported that the dramatic increase in injuries and deaths was attributable not only to the increased popularity and use of these vehicles, but also to the larger, faster and more powerful ATVs. When first manufactured in the early 1980s, ATVs typically had smaller 7-horsepower, 89 cc engines and weighed between 160 and 200 lbs. Today, there are ATVs that may have engines as large as 50-horsepower and 600 cc, weigh more than 400 lbs, and capable of speeds of up to 100 miles per hour.

As its popularity has grown, the increased recreational use of ATVs has also raised concerns about the role of alcohol use and other recreational drugs in contributing to the dramatic rise in injuries.

States have recognized the increasing popularity and use of ATVs, and the unfortunate rise in injuries related to their use. ATV-related legislation has been enacted in all 50 states; however there is great variation in scope from state-to-state. Only 31 states require helmet use and 28 states have minimum age requirements.