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Epidemiology of Road Traffic Injuries among Children

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Abstract

Of all the unintentional injuries among children, about 38% are from children's road traffic injuries (RTIs). This denotes 16.5% of mortality among children out of the global mortality for due to RTIs with fatal outcomes. As children grow older the predominant type of their injuries changes. Children aged among 5-19 are more likely to be injured on roads. They are mainly victims of the adults' faults. Many children do not just use the streets for school journeys or as pedestrians. They also use them as a meeting place with friends and as a playground. In many inner city areas, there are few safe places for children to play. Most parents judge the outdoor places where their children play as safe. Child casualties are lower in the winter months and highest in the summer months. This may be because longer daylight hours in these months combined with better weather, gives children extra hours to play outside the home. Rates of road traffic injuries are higher in older children, boys and more economically deprived children. There are some of explanations for these variations, for instance variations in risk exposure, maturity, environmental hazards and children's behaviour regarding these variations in other age groups and other situations. There are still many unanswered questions about children's injuries. For example we do not know parents' judgements about their outdoor environment. Are parents well-enough informed? The role of children's play patterns on risk of accidental injuries has not been studied, and the level of independent outdoor activities in children is not clear. What are children's main risky outdoor activities? And are children able to recognise these activities as risky? Do answers to the above questions vary by age, sex and deprivation? And if so, can these variations explain injury rate differences in different ages, sexes and socio-economic groups? It can be concluded that the epidemiological pattern of children's RTIs is completely different from adults. Children are more vulnerable on roads and these could be resulted from different exposure to risk, their risk perception, amount of parents supervision, variation of their growth and developments and their behavioural and play pattern. Considering of children's particular needs is essential on road safety. It is their definite right to live in a safe environment and it is the adults' responsibility to provide such an environment for them.

Keywords: Fault, Casualty, Perception.

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