



This Issue in the Journal

Paediatric driveway run-over injuries: time to redesign?

Kai Hsun Hsiao, Clinton Newbury, Nita Bartlett, Rangi Dansey, Philip Morreau, James Hamill

Vehicles hitting children in residential driveways are an important and preventable cause of child injury and death in New Zealand. Our study investigated the demographic and environmental characteristics relating to these accidents. We found that children aged 0–4 years, particularly toddlers, were most commonly hit, and that these injuries typically occurred on the child's own home driveway with the driver most commonly being a parent or relative. We also found that long driveways, shared driveways, unfenced driveways, and driveways that were used as play areas were a common feature of the driveways where such injuries occurred. We believe that physical separation of driveways from children's play and living areas (whether by fencing, changing driveway layout, or other means) would help in preventing these injuries.

Opportunistic immunisation of paediatric inpatients at Rotorua Hospital: audit and discussion

Rowena Gilbert, Katharine Wrigley

Immunisation rates in New Zealand are disappointingly low, with only 76% of 2 year olds being up to date with their immunisations, even though most New Zealand parents are not opposed to immunisation. It is important to use all possible opportunities to bring children up to date with their immunisations, including hospital stays. We studied the notes of children admitted to Rotorua Children's Unit over a 6-month period, and found that catch-up immunisation was very rarely given. We have made a number of suggestions for improving practice, which are being introduced within this unit, including better systems for identifying which children are behind with their vaccines, and training of staff. We hope that our experience and suggestions will prompt other hospitals in New Zealand to evaluate their performance and introduce systems for catch-up immunisation.

Preventing winter falls: a randomised controlled trial of a novel intervention

Lianne Parkin, Sheila M Williams, Patricia Priest

Anecdotal reports suggest that pedestrians who wear socks over top of their footwear are less likely to slip and fall in icy conditions. To remedy a surprising lack of scientific evidence for this novel use of socks, we undertook a trial on icy hillside footpaths in Dunedin. Pedestrians travelling in a downhill direction were randomly allocated to either put socks on over their shoes or to continue on their way as normal. Two-thirds of these pedestrians had previously fallen on ice. The sock-wearing group

found the footpath significantly less slippery, and displayed greater confidence, than the comparison group. While it may create some embarrassment for the image-conscious, this simple, cheap intervention has the potential to improve public health by reducing winter falls in the pedestrian population.

Infant and perinatal outcomes of triplet pregnancy in Auckland: better than expected?

Malcolm Battin, Michelle Wise, Anne DeZoete, Peter Stone

The triplet birth rate has increased since the 1970s but a triplet pregnancy has significant implications for the mother, the infant, and society as a whole. There has been a lack of good quality data on neurodevelopmental outcomes for triplets born prematurely. We report that surviving triplets born <1500g were normal in 66%, had mild abnormality in 17%, moderate abnormality in 15%, and severe abnormality in only 2%. Although triplets represent a significant burden, the outcome particularly in those <1500g at birth compares favourably with that reported.

Pacific Islands Families: Child and Parental Physical Activity and Body Size—design and methodology

Melody Oliver, Philip J Schluter, Janis Paterson, Gregory S Kolt, Grant M Schofield

This paper outlines a study to characterise the physical activity patterns of Pacific children and identify factors related to physical activity and sedentary behaviours in Pacific children, within the Pacific Islands Families study (a birth cohort study of Pacific infants born at Middlemore Hospital, South Auckland, in 2000). This study involved using accelerometers to gather an objective measure of physical activity in the children and their mothers when the children were aged 6 years. This is a unique opportunity to investigate objectively-determined physical activity patterns in young Pacific children and their mothers, and identify activity associates and determinants from cross-sectional and longitudinal data sources, and is the first study of its kind internationally.

Sudden unexpected infant death and bedsharing: referrals to the Wellington Coroner 1997–2006

Alistair Escott, Dawn E Elder, Jane M Zuccollo

This paper reviews 54 sudden and unexpected deaths that occurred in the first year of life, over the decade from 1997–2006, that were referred to the Wellington-based coronial paediatric pathology service and which for which there was no clear medical diagnosis found. Overall, 50% of infants had been placed to sleep in a non-recommended sleep position and bed sharing was associated with 53.7% of deaths. Sudden unexpected death in infancy in the Wellington region over this time period has been associated with unsafe sleep environments and sleep positions. Every effort should be made to ensure that information about safe infant sleep practices reaches the caregivers of those infants who are particularly at risk.