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**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A CULTURALLY SENSITIVE BURN AND FIRE PREVENTION PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR INNER CITY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

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**Introduction** Injury prevention has become a major health-care priority. Burns, a leading cause of death in children, often occur in minority based, lower socio-economic neighbourhoods. This study sought to determine if targeted fire/burn prevention curriculum, delivered in an at-risk school system could teach and sustain prevention knowledge in elementary students.

**Methods** A 60-page prevention curriculum for grades 1 through 6 was presented with two 32-page, picture story books regarding scald prevention and family fire safety. A packet of alphabet childhood injury/safety cards was also included. Parent materials were provided in Spanish and Somalian. Students completed a pretest assessing fire safety and burn prevention knowledge. A post-test was administered at the completion of the grade appropriate curriculum and again at 6 months postinstruction.

**Results** Students (681) median age 8, Hispanic (98%), (1%) Caucasian and 1(%) African American & Somalian, completed pre-post and post-post tests. Students, after receiving materials and curriculum, showed significant improvement in documented knowledge from pre to post-test ( $p < 0.001$ ). Post/post tests results, completed 6 months later, showed sustained learning for all grades ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusion** Culturally sensitive programs which deliver prevention information to children and parents through entertaining and repetitive story, helps to heighten health literacy and successfully deliver critical safety information to families. The books and cards, which were given to each child for home usage, were likely read repeatedly. This appears to have sustained learning and effected knowledge retention well beyond initial classroom instruction.