

**ABUSIVE HEAD TRAUMA INCIDENCE AND PREVENTION  
IN QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA**

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**Background** Abusive head trauma (AHT), including both shaken baby syndrome and inflicted traumatic brain injury, has been reported to be the most common cause of morbidity and mortality in physically abused infants. Despite the serious nature of injuries evident in AHT cases, no Australian AHT incidence figures had previously been reported in published literature.

**Aims** In order to inform prevention measures, a study was designed to ascertain the public health burden of AHT in Queensland, with a subsequent prevention programme trial developed.

**Methods** Queensland Trauma Registry data was linked to the Queensland Child Death Register to identify all cases of severe head injuries caused by abuse and suspected abuse in Queensland infants aged 0–24 months occurring during the 4-year period of 2005–2008.

**Results** An annual incidence of 6.7 (CI 2.8 to 13.1) cases of abusive head trauma per 100 000 infants aged 0–24 months was established. Rates ratios indicated that incidence was higher for children aged under 12 months, male infants and infants of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ethnicity.

**Contribution to the Field** The study provided the first Australian incidence estimates of abusive head trauma, indicating similar rates to that reported in age-incidence peaks for other forms of childhood injury. Findings from the study are being utilised to inform the implementation of a prevention programme trial that will also be overviewed in this presentation which is currently underway in Cooktown, Queensland.