SAFETY IN SCHOOL SPORTS (TEKO)

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Background In Finnish elementary schools injuries happen mostly in physical education (PE) classes, recesses and on the way to school. Most injuries are mild, but treatment can be time consuming and expensive. Especially knee, low back and head injuries may cause long-term pain and disabilities.

A remarkable part of these injuries can be prevented by enhancing pupils' motor skills and awareness of injury risks by improving quality and contents of PE and health education classes, and taking care of safety equipment and environment.

Methods The Sports and Exercise Safety in Finland programme (LiVE) and its second nationwide implementation project TEKO (2010–), is delivering research findings and producing educational material to the internet to promote physical activity and safety of sports and leisure time (http://www.tervekoululainen.fi). The main target group for TEKO is secondary school teachers and pupils.

Results In TEKO project the safety promotion is focused on 10 segments; physical activity, sports skills, maturation, nutrition, rest and sleep, environment and equipment, health care, atmosphere and rules, injuries and support network. Teachers can use free of charge information packages and practical toolkits per segment to enhance the sports and leisure time safety.

Contribution to the Field The implementation set up developed in TEKO project has received a positive feedback. Experiences indicate that this kind of set up might be a spreadable and affordable way to do safety promotion in schools.

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