

# CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISONS OF PARENTS' KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS RELATED TO CHILD SAFETY

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**Background** As the documentary film *Babies* illustrates, children worldwide reach developmental milestones at roughly the same time. Yet rates of childhood injury morbidity and mortality differ vastly from country to country. Understanding cross-cultural differences in parental beliefs and practices is essential to risk reduction and complement the other pillars of child safety strategies—device use, environmental improvements and laws/regulations.

**Purpose** The aim is to highlight results of studies on parental knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours conducted in several SKWW member countries.

**Methods** Parents' perspectives were assessed in using a mix of techniques—observational surveys, focus groups, telephone interviews, online surveys, and written questionnaires.

**Results** More needs to be done worldwide to educate parents that most injuries are preventable. In Israel, three-fifths of parents believed that being injured while playing is just part of childhood. In Vietnam, two-thirds of parents did not require their children to wear helmets when riding on streets near their homes. In Brazil, most mothers surveyed did not know that injuries led to a high incidence of deaths and hospitalisations. In China, many parents did not know that lack of supervision could lead to drowning and about half knew about pool drain entrapment. In the USA, four-fifths of parents whose children had been injured while playing team sports thought that it was just part of the game and could not have been prevented.

**Conclusions** Formative research among parents is essential to effective child safety programmes. This helps to identify gaps in knowledge and guides behavioural change strategies.