LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Head injuries in helmeted child bicyclists

EDITOR,—It is pleasing to see facial injury in bicycle riders being given the attention it warrants; there has been so little investigation of this since Thompson et al in 1990 and the Brisbane bicycle study.1 In the latter, 813 children are reported to have suffered 315 injunctions; we found that injury to the lower face predominated in those who were wearing a cycle helmet.

As a maxillofacial surgeon I endorse the authors' suggestion of combining a facial protector with the bicycle helmet, and even question why helmet design should be any different from that required by motor cyclists? It is now time to investigate further which parts of the face are being injured in bicycle accidents, to relate these to head injury, and then design a more appropriate helmet.

I congratulate the editor and editorial board on a magnificent first edition of Injury Prevention and trust that you are 'badgering and bullying' the surgical and emergency care fraternity to submit papers to the journal!

CAROLINE HC ACTON
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Congratulations

EDITOR,—I must offer my heartiest congratulations to you and Richard Smith for your editorial in the BMJ on preventing childhood injuries.1 I am delighted that the BMJ Publishing Group is producing a journal on injury prevention; there has long been a need for an international journal on this topic.

I have written a book called Motor Driving and Road Safety in India, published by Asian Publishers NAI SARAK, Delhi, in which I have written several chapters to the history of children on roads. It is regrettable that not enough responsibility is taken by the public, politicians, and even academics and paediatricians to try and stop the rising child mortality on the roads from cars; this is now the number one killer of children in both developed and developing nations.

I wish the new journal every success in the future.

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BOOK REVIEW


EDITOR.—My congratulations to you and the journal Injury Prevention—I hope it will be a success and help to stop avoidable injuries.

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PREVIOUS EVENTS

In March 1995 the American Association for Automotive Medicine (AAAM) sponsored a Special Topic Symposium in Washington, 'Children in Traffic: Exploring their Special Needs as Occupants, Pedestrians, and Bicyclists'. The speakers included Phyllis Agran MD, MPH, Murray Mackay PhD, DSc, Sue Partyla MS, J Alex Haller MD, Ted Miller PhD, Barry Pless MD, and R Scheiber, MD, MPH. Particularly noteworthy were the disturbing findings presented about the level of use of proper restraints by school age children. Present technology appears insufficient for children of differing size and shapes.


A Safe Community Seminar was held in India last August and included drivers and conductors of bus transport, insurance companies, school teachers, and students. (From the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion, Karolinska Institute, Sundbyberg, Sweden.)

The Ambulatory Pediatric Association Injury Control Special Interest Group met March 1994 and selected Len Bancroft, Director of the Connecticut Childhood Injury Prevention Center, Hartford, Connecticut, as its Chairperson. The meeting also provided updates on funding for injury control research and reports from related organizations (including ISCAIP).

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign in the US promoted a Family Safety Check during its Safe Kids week (May 6–13) this year. The 10 items in the check include tips on traffic safety, drowning prevention, fire/burn prevention, firearms safety, falls prevention, poisoning prevention, and emergency response. The campaign has also launched a new bike safety program CYCLE SMART which agencies can identify every minor choking hazard in the home or day care environment—they must have a way of focusing on the forest rather than each tree. Similarly, the authors could do more to identify the principles by which the media could modify the climate of public opinion to demand a safer environment for children.

There is little doubt that Saving Children will benefit groups interested in addressing the injury problem by bringing the expert knowledge of the authors and the lessons of the literature to bear on those who seek to do good. To have its impact, however, this book must be read by the constituencies for whom it has been written, rather than by those of us who are already indoctrinated into the childhood injury prevention field. Is the book reaching this audience, though? It is unfortunating that the title is somewhat obscure and doesn’t identify the target audience.

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