VALID MEASUREMENT OF ISOLATION POOL FENCING: A METHODOLOGIC CHALLENGE

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Valid Measurement of Isolation Pool Fencing: a methodological challenge. Drowning has been identified as the leading cause of injury-related death among children in the United States. Fencing around pools is an important injury prevention strategy, but there is limited information about effective fence design. This study will use objective and subjective metrics to evaluate fence height and opening size among a diverse, representative sample of households with young children. This study will inform future guidelines on pool fence design and help prevent drowning among children.
of death for children under 5 years of age in many areas with hot climates and residents from upper socioeconomic strata. Isolation pool fencing has been documented to reduce the risk of toddler drowning by 83%, when compared to perimeter or three sided fencing (Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 2006). Valid measurement of this proven drowning countermeasure is essential for risk assessment, and for evaluating the effectiveness of educational and legislative interventions. This presentation will draw from the authors experience trying to measure the adequacy of residential pool fencing as part of a randomised controlled trial she conducted in south Florida. Topics to be covered include survey item wording, techniques for minimising misclassification, timing of assessment, the continuum of compliance, and ambiguous outcomes. She will discuss the challenges she encountered, and provide advice for translational researchers who seek to measure this important environmental factor. Many of her insights are relevant to the measurement of other child safety outcomes.