609 unrestrained children less than 10 years old were killed as motor vehicle occupants and scores more died when they were incorrectly restrained. Based on the best available information, the simplest and most effective way to provide adequate protection from airbags is to use rear facing infant seats only in the back seat and to ensure that anyone sitting in front is restrained by lap and shoulder belts.

Now the use of passenger-side airbags is being questioned. One proposal that sounds like ‘throwing out the baby with the bath-water’ is to have a switch on all passenger-side airbags that would enable an owner to disconnect them. Such an option is already available in vehicles lacking a back seat that can accommodate a rear facing child seat, but it hardly makes sense for the entire fleet of cars with passenger airbags. Judging from the public response years ago to the seatbelt interlock system, which many owners disconnected, people who are unnecessarily alarmed about airbags will disconnect them and deprive their passengers of protection.

Blaming airbags for the unnecessary and tragic deaths of unrestrained children is like blaming speed bumps if children are hauled out of the back of pickup trucks. The issue, in both cases, is the need to make sure that children are properly restrained.

SUSAN P BAKER
Center for Injury Research and Policy,
Johns Hopkins School of Public Health,
624 North Broadway,
Baltimore, MD 21205; USA

FLAURA K WINSTON
Center for Interdisciplinary Pediatric Trauma Research,
The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania

1 Healey JR, O’Donnell J. Deadly airbags. USA Today 1996; July 8: 8b–3b.
5 Anonymous. Racing to find solutions to the risk of using airbags. USA Today 1996, July 8: 3b.

CALENDAR AND NOTICES

The 10th Annual California Conference on Childhood Injury Control is being held in Sacramento, 16–19 September 1996 (CSN).

The 6th Alberta Injury Prevention Conference is being held in Kananskis, Alberta, 8–10 October 1996. Further details: Injury Prevention Centre at +1 403 492 6019 or fax +1 403 492 7154.

4th International Cochrane Colloquium is being held in Adelaide, Australia, 19–23 October 1996. Further details: 1996 Cochrane Colloquium Secretariat, PO Box 986, Kent Town, SA 5069, Australia.

Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine Conference is being held in Vancouver, BC, at the Waterfront Centre Hotel, 6–9 October 1996. Further details: AAAM, 2340 Des Plaines Ave, Des Plaines, IL 60018, USA.

SIP96 is the acronym for ‘Success in Injury Prevention — BC Perspectives’ a special one day conference that will follow the AAM meeting (above). It will focus on injury prevention programs implemented in recent years in BC. Further details: SAPMEA Conventions, 80 Brougham Place, North Adelaide, SA 5006, Australia.

MORE WEB SITES

Don’t forget that the BMJ has a home page on the WWW: the URL is http://www.bmj.com/bmj/

The University of Northern Iowa, under a grant through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has established a National Program for Playground Safety. Its website is http://iscs.uni.edu/80/coe/playgrnd/main.html.

The Center for the Future of Children at the David and Lucille Packard Foundation has announced the availability of its journal, The Future of Children, on the WWW. The journal, now in its fifth year of publication, summarizes current research and policy issues relating to the wellbeing of children. The site is: http://www.futureofchildren.org

Sue Gallagher writes: Thanks for including the CSN home page in the page on Internet listings — unfortunately one of the ‘w’s was omitted from the address. The correct address is http://www.ecd.org/HHH/CSN/.

And Hank Weiss points to another error: the correct ICRIN address is: http://www.pitt.edu/~hweiss/injury.htm. But, no matter, the address is now changed and shorter: http://www.pitt.edu/~icrin.

JOURNAL CITATIONS

Editors note: these citations have been culled from the following databases — Medline, Current Contents, Poly Abstracts, and Social Science Citation Index. Your comments are welcome, as well as suggestions about other pertinent databases.

Methods


General


Traffic


