Conference Report

Conference on Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention in the Underprivileged New Delhi, India, 9 March 2000

This meeting followed the 5th International Conference on Injury Prevention and Control in New Delhi. It was jointly organized by the Malaysian Pediatric Association and the International Society for Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention. Despite “conference fatigue”, the seminar attracted (and retained for one full day) over 40 delegates. It included a series of excellent presentations and a lively debate.

Dinesh Mohan provided a challenging start with a paper on “Issues in Child Injury Prevention”. He invited the audience to consider the influence of culture on child safety, asserting that, “culture in the public and political domain is only used for purposes of oppression, not for liberation”. Mohan believes that all people value life in the same way, and that views that some societies accept death or serious injuries more fatalistically, are not supported by evidence. The poorest families in society can be destroyed economically by one catastrophic health event or accident.

The theme of “culture” was woven through the subsequent presentations. Anuradha Bose and Jim Nixon presented case studies of drowning from India and Australia. Drowning as a cause of injury death in rural India was evident. Low cost, intermediate technology solutions to this problem included thorn barriers rather than expensive walls around large open wells, the use of inner tubes from tyres for children learning to swim, programmed to encourage children not to swim alone, and to call for help if other children were in danger in the water. The Australian experience of changing public attitudes to pool fencing was described by Jim Nixon, notably the time it took to accomplish this: 10 years.

This juxtaposition of presentations illustrated the irony of open water; in India it is a hazard faced by the poor, whereas in Australia, childhood drowning is associated with increasing affluence.

A second theme was violence. Rosa Gofin reviewed a broad framework of risk factors and opportunities for violence prevention. Anuradha Bose (presenting a paper for Abraham Joseph) stimulated a debate about the problems of female infanticide in India and other southeast Asian countries.

The issue of children and work was acknowledged the regrettable need for some cation for work. This pragmatic approach ing hours, with adequate rests, subsidized can- cencouragement of light, safe work, short work- heavy or dangerous work resulting in injuries. From work are needed to help support their children miss out on schooling because wages in Bangalore, India. Many underprivileged Learn” is a project taking place in one school presentation. “Safely Earn a Little While you

The 6th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Control will take place from 12–15 May 2002, at the Montréal Convention Centre, Montréal, Québec, Canada. An initiative of the World Health Organization, the conference will promote the dissemination of new knowledge, intensify the exchange between research, theory and practice, attract new public and private partners as well as mobilize stakeholders, decision makers, and the public towards safety.

The theme of the conference is injuries, suicide and violence: building knowledge, policies and practices to promote a safer world. The main subjects covered are:

- Road safety
- Occupational safety
- Prevention of suicide and violence
- Home and institutional safety
- Sport and leisure safety
- Trauma care and rehabilitation
- Urban safety
- Epidemiology, intervention, and evaluation strategies
- Armed conflicts
- Product safety

For further information contact 6th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Control, 511 place d’Armes, #600, Montréal QC H2Y 2W7, Canada (tel: +1 514 848 1133/1 877 213 8368 (Canada/ US), fax: +1 514 288 6469, email: trauma@coplanor.qc.ca, web site: www.chirama2002.com).

CALENDAR

1st WHO Safe Community-Conf...
• Quality control standards are urgently needed to ensure that toughened glass products are what they claim to be.

Nothing that we found in our randomised controlled trial leads us to change our view, based on previously published evidence, that high impact resistant glass (toughened glassware is the way forward for reducing the risk of both intentional and accidental injuries in bars.

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Editor’s note: Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa!

Unintentional injury prevention survey

EDITOR,—Unintentional injury is a leading cause of death in childhood. In developed countries, more children die of injuries each year than all childhood diseases combined. Limited data are available on unintentional injuries in India, but it is known that in some parts of India drowning is the leading cause of death in the 1–12 year age group.

A survey was carried out with the objectives of assessing the awareness among pediatricians of the importance of unintentional injuries in children and the extent of involvement of pediatricians in injury prevention.

The survey was conducted in Jaipur, India, during the XXXVI National Conference of the Indian Academy of Pediatrics held in January 1999. Four hundred pre-tested, self-administered questionnaires were randomly distributed to the participants of the conference. There was a response rate of 42.7% (171/400).

The respondents were a heterogeneous group. Of the 171 who responded, 116 resided in cities, 42 in towns, and eight in villages. Two did not answer this question and three others reported that they worked and lived in more than one place. A total of 58 respondents worked in teaching hospitals, 71 in private and charitable institutions, 11 in outpatient clinics, and 31 in more than one place. More than 90% (158) reported that they attend to children with injuries.

Ninety eight per cent of the respondents regularly provided health education; only 43% provided information specifically on childhood unintentional injury prevention. Information is not available on the extent of health education. Eleven per cent of the respondents had received some training in injury prevention. Forty three per cent felt that unintentional injury prevention would not work without legislation. The most common injuries encountered were poisoning (154), falls (138), burns and scalds (107), road traffic accidents (95), and near-drowning (72).

The above data show that unintentional injuries are widely encountered by pediatricians, but not all counsel regularly on injury prevention. Pediatricians are ideally suited to incorporate injury prevention programs into primary care. They, however, need knowledge on the epidemiology of childhood injuries.

The Indian Academy of Pediatrics has taken the first step in injury prevention by publishing a parent education booklet on injury prevention. As poisonings are now known to be the commonest injury presenting to pediatricians, the revised version of the booklet could include a section on prevention of accidental ingestion of poisons and corrosives.

Encouraging the collection of data on injuries and establishing a database on childhood injuries are some of the steps to be taken in initiating a national injury prevention initiative.

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France tries harder

From France, a report that France is trying to come to grips with road deaths. Last year’s figure of 8028 deaths is a slight improvement, −4.8% over the previous year. But two years previously, for the first time ever, the total of road deaths was less than 8000. Consequently, observers still characterize France as the “red light” of road safety in Europe. As elsewhere, youth and carelessness combine to make road traffic accidents the leading cause of death among those under age 25. Sadly, the number of cyclists and motorcyclists killed increased. The report adds (in translation) that “speed remains the great enemy of safety”. On highways the average speed is 125 km/h! Adding to the dismal picture, about 40% of those killed on highways were not using seat belts. This year, the Prime Minister has declared road safety to be the “great national cause”.

The League against Road Violence recalls that in 1997 the Minister of Transport vowed to improve, −4.8% over the previous year. But two years previously, for the first time ever, the total of road deaths remained the great enemy of safety”. On highways the average speed is 125 km/h! Adding to the dismal picture, about 40% of those killed on highways were not using seat belts. This year, the Prime Minister has declared road safety to be the “great national cause”.

Peter Mayles is quoted as observing that “Le Français au volant voit dans chaque véhicule qui est devant lui quelque chose à dépasser” (The French see each car in front of them as something to be overtaken).