

News and notes

NEWS AND NOTES GO ON-LINE

If you have visited the *Injury Prevention* web site recently (<http://www.injuryprevention.com>), you will have seen that the news and notes are easily accessible and are updated regularly. This allows us to keep readers up to date without having to wait for the next printed issue of the journal. If you have anything that you would be of interest to readers, including calendar items, please send it to Michael Hayes as soon as possible so that it can be added to the web site—don't wait for the closing date for copy for the next printed issue. Michael's contact details are at the end of the news and notes in every issue.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

At the Sixth World Conference on Injury Prevention and Control held in Montreal in May, the International Distinguished Career Award was presented to *Injury Prevention* editor Professor Barry Pless by the Injury Control and Emergency Health Services Section of the American Public Health Association in recognition of outstanding dedication and leadership in injury control and emergency health services with contribution and achievements that have had a significant and long term impact on the problem of injury. Dr Pless is a physician at the Montreal Children's Hospital and a professor at McGill University. Past recipients of the award have been Peter Vulcan, Leif Svanström, and Dinesh Mohan.

Hal Stratton has been confirmed as the eighth Chairman of the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). He heads the federal agency responsible for protecting the public against unreasonable risks of injuries and deaths associated with consumer products. He will serve a term that expires in October of 2006. At his confirmation hearings, Mr Stratton mentioned three topics of importance to CPSC's mission: improving information sharing with other agencies; enhancing communications with consumers, especially seniors, parents, and people who do not speak English as their first language; and improving oversight of imported products. Mr Stratton was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation. He is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma School of Law. After law school, Mr Stratton served in the US Army and then moved to Albuquerque. In 1978, he was elected to the New Mexico House of Representatives and in 1986 was elected as Attorney General of New Mexico.

JUICER DEFECTS COST COMPANY \$300 000

In July, the US CPSC announced a court ruling imposing a \$300 000 civil penalty against a firm for not reporting a serious product hazard—the first time such a penalty has been awarded by a court for a company's failure to report. The ruling was made in a civil penalty action brought on CPSC's behalf against a small California importer and distributor of juice extractors (juicers) and other household appliances. The company, Aroma, received telephone calls and letters beginning early in 1998 reporting that the juicers were breaking apart and injuring consumers. By the time Aroma reported to CPSC in November 1998, the firm had over 20 reports of incidents of juicers breaking apart, including reports of injuries to at least 22 consumers. Five of these injuries required stitches and one required surgery for lacerated arteries. Aroma Housewares Co conducted a joint recall with CPSC of about 40 000 of these juice extractors in June 1999. For more information, go to the press release at <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PREREL/PRHTML99/99132.html>.

AUSTRALIAN REPORTS

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has recently released *Persisting morbidity among hospitalisations for near drowning, Australia 1997–1998*. It can be downloaded as a pdf file via <http://www.nisu.flinders.edu.au/pubs/reports/2002/injcat45.php>. The aim of the report was to quantify persisting morbidity resulting from immersion events, but all immersion events for the period are also described. Other possible sources of routine data on persisting morbidity related to immersions are briefly outlined. The Institute has also released *Hospitalisation due to traumatic brain injury, Australia 1997–1998*. Visit <http://www.nisu.flinders.edu.au/pubs/reports/2002/injcat43.php> to download it as a pdf document. It shows that traumatic brain injury (TBI) accounted for 7% of all injury hospital separations. It includes data on the age standardised rate of TBI and the main causes of TBI among different age groups; the male rate was higher than the female rate in most age groups. Statistically significant state rate differences were recorded overall, but not among very severe cases. A recent decline in the rate of TBI was also noted but the authors note that this requires further assessment.

New South Wales (NSW) Health Department of Health regularly produces the

NSW Public Health Bulletin (see <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/phb/phb.html>) to enable the timely communication of information on major public health issues and thus to contribute to the development of a well-trained and informed public health workforce in NSW. Two recent issues have focused on injury prevention issues: *Fall injury prevention* (vol 13(1–2), Jan–Feb 2002) available at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/phb/2002.html#janfeb02> and *Research & planning for injury prevention* (vol 13(4), April 2002) at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/phb/currentissue.html>.

LATCH GUIDE IN SAFE RIDE NEWS

The July/August issue of *Safe Ride News* published in August features an authoritative guide on how to use the LATCH system, which becomes mandatory in all new passenger vehicles in the US from 1 September 2002. LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children), the US version of ISOFIX, is a major step towards improving child safety in family vehicles. While it is expected to make child restraint installation easier in many cases, consumers will need help to avoid certain pitfalls. The LATCH system replaces the vehicle seat belt as the basic means of securing a child restraint to a vehicle. Connectors at the base of the child's seat hook to anchors in the car. Forward facing car seats also have a tether strap at the top that hooks to a built-in upper anchor. Families with older vehicles without LATCH anchors can continue to use seat belts to install their children's restraints. The guide is posted on the web site www.saferide.com. Fact sheets on LATCH and tethers are also available on the web site. These sheets are intended for use in educating parents and other consumers. Child safety educators, technicians, and dealerships can order reproducible masters of fact sheets. *Safe Ride News* is the US national, independent, bimonthly publication focusing on child passenger safety and traffic safety issues. Safe Ride News Publications has "written the book" on using LATCH, publishing a training manual, *Tethering Child Restraints, Including LATCH*. To subscribe to *Safe Ride News*, obtain fact sheets, or purchase the manual, see the web site www.saferide.com or contact Safe Ride News, tel: 800 422 4121 or +1 203 488 9808, c/o Stamler Publishing Co, PO Box 3367, Branford, CT 06405, USA.

MOST BRITISH DRIVERS BREAK SPEED LIMITS

Most motorists exceed speed limits, with more than half the cars on motorways

and dual carriageways travelling faster than the stated maximum, UK government figures show. Almost two thirds of drivers ignore the 30 miles/hour (50 km/hour) restrictions on urban roads, and over three quarters of articulated lorries exceed 40 miles/hour (65 km/hour) limits on major, non-urban single carriageway roads, statistics for British roads in 2001 have revealed. The Department for Transport figures relate to speeds chosen by drivers at sites which were not unduly constrained by either road layout or exceptional traffic congestion. Nearly one fifth of cars were travelling in excess of 80 miles/hour (130 km/hour) on motorways where the speed limit is 70 miles/hour (115 km/hour). Visit <http://www.transtat.dft.gov.uk/tables/2002/vsgb/vsgb.htm> for full details.

SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

Promoting safety in schools: International experience and action is a new publication from the US Bureau of Justice Assistance. It describes European and non-European initiatives, trends in school safety, and critical elements of a comprehensive approach to school safety and violence prevention. The document is available through the BJA Clearinghouse at www.ncjrs.org.

INCENSE FIRES IN DUBAI

The sweet smell of bukhour (Arabian incense) can often come with a smell you had not bargained for—the smell of burning. Negligence in the use of bukhour to fumigate the home or clothes often results in major fire hazards, according to Dubai Civil Defence. These fires often had tragic repercussions as was the case a few years ago when a local family lost their child. The boy was burned to death in a closet when a fire started by an incense burner raged through his home. The persistence of the Civil Defence in educating the public about the hazards of using incense burners paid off when the number of fires caused by these burners dropped dramatically through the years. This is quite an achievement, considering that it is an integral part of daily life in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to perfume clothes and the home with bukhour. In a special decorated incense burner known as the mabkhara, pieces of processed perfumed wood such as oud or sandalwood are placed on top of a piece of coal to produce scented fumes as they burn filling the air with a strong aroma. The incense is passed among the guests in the Majlis or sitting room as a gesture of hospitality in the UAE.

Sharif Anis Nakib of the Civil Defence is the man responsible for the educative programmes. “We have managed through the years to bring down the

number of fires caused by using mabkhara. Last year we recorded five blazes while the previous year’s figure was eight”, he said. He pointed out that was not the case 10 years ago when the figures were much higher. Nakib advises the public to be careful when handling a mabkhara. Never leave a mabkhara with a live coal in it alone, he stressed. “Make sure that you put out the coal after using it. Children should never be left near the mabkhara as they may play with it and end up suffering burns or worse starting a fire”, he said. As for electric mabkharas, Nakib said most of the types that are available in the market are not safe enough. These mabkharas have a metal surface, which heats up to burn the bukhour. “Most are very low in quality and end up causing electric shocks or short circuits”, he pointed out. He added that they are also dangerous for children as the hot surface may burn them. He also advised those motorists who fumigate their cars to be extra careful as to where they place the mabkhara and also not to leave it in the car. Further information: <http://www.gulf-news.com/Articles/news.asp?ArticleID=56989>.

50TH ISSUE OF HAZARD

Hazard, the highly informative publication from Australia’s Victoria Injury Surveillance and Applied Research System (VISAR)—formerly known as VISS—celebrates its 50th issue with a detailed review of its achievements. The impressive links between data collection, the role of the surveillance system and its outputs, and subsequent safety actions by a range of agencies are tabulated, accompanied by an extensive reference list. The 50th issue (like all others) is well worth reading. This issue—along with all others—can be downloaded from www.general.monash.edu.au/muar/visar.

BUCKLE UP AMERICA UPDATE

Reported constant seat belt use in vehicles with air bags in the US is 85%, five percentage points higher than in vehicles without the devices, a survey by the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports. In addition, according to the recently released 2000 Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey Volume 3 Air Bag Report, the percentage of drivers who reported having air bags in their primary vehicles rose to 67% in 2000 from 53% in late 1998. Five percent of drivers said they have side air bags in their main vehicles. The survey also found that 94% of respondents know that air bags aren’t a substitute for seat belts. Drivers who wore seat belts sometimes, rarely, or never were more likely to incorrectly say that you don’t have to buckle up when your vehicle has air bags. Forty eight percent of respondents said they felt safer in

vehicles with air bags, while 40% felt about as safe with the devices as without them. A summary of the survey is available at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/outreach/traftech/2002.html> and click on report number 272.

DRUG PACKAGING AND DOSE LEVELS

Does the way your medicine is packaged make a difference? It does, when one pill can kill your child. According to a study commissioned by ANEC, the European consumer voice in standardisation, parents have to be aware of the dangers that lie in tiny bottles that contain some medicines that can kill a child with less than one unit. The study, conducted by the Pharmacy Department at London’s Guy’s and St Thomas’ Hospital, came about as a reaction to the proposed draft European standard on child resistant non-reclosable packaging for medicinal products, prEN14375. The draft standard uses a test in which a child has 10 minutes to remove units from the packaging—with the failure level being more than 8 units, regardless of the toxicity of the drug. ANEC questions the appropriateness of the 8 unit criterion as in certain cases fewer tablets can be extremely harmful. The report suggests that the solution may lie in linking the toxicity of the drug to the level of difficulty in opening the pack and provides guidelines on how to identify the drugs of greatest concern.

HEAD RESTRAINT POSITIONING

Each year there are nearly two million rear-impact vehicle crashes in the US. Industry data show that more than 20% of drivers in rear-impact crashes report neck injuries. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, neck injuries cost the auto insurance industry, and ultimately consumers, more than \$7 billion a year. And while research has also shown properly positioned head restraints can significantly reduce such injuries, a new survey from Progressive has found that only 14% of US drivers know the optimal head restraint positioning; 18% think all vehicles come with head restraints already properly positioned; and 40% don’t adjust their head restraint when driving a newly purchased vehicle.

EUROPEAN PRAM AND BUGGY STANDARD—AT LAST

After almost a decade of work, members of CEN, the European standards body, have voted to adopt the European draft standard prEN1888 “Childcare articles—Wheeled child conveyances—Safety requirements and test methods” (the long winded name for prams and buggies).

The European consumer voice for standardisation, ANEC, which has been involved in the development of the standard throughout the long process, had actively lobbied for the acceptance of this standard. If the overall voting on this standard would have been negative, this would have resulted in one of the most used childcare products having no harmonised standard in Europe. In the June/July issue of its latest newsletter, ANEC confirms that the new standard will provide an adequate level of safety for children using prams and pushchairs. See www.anec.org/public/newsletter/newsletter.htm for further information.

NEW MULTIMEDIA CHILD PASSENGER WEB SITE

Partners for Child Passenger Safety (PCPS) recently launched a new educational multimedia web site called *Car and Booster Seat Safety: Increasing Awareness to Protect Children*, www.chop.edu/carseat. The site includes four short movies, information on installing and using child safety seats and on seat belt use for older children, quick tips to help you review the information, and links to other online resources. The site was created to increase awareness of appropriate and correct use of child restraints and seat belts in motor vehicles. Its content follows best practice guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and US government agency, NHTSA. Parents and caregivers are the intended users for the site PCPS hopes that injury prevention and child passenger safety educators will use the site as part of their curriculum. Contact Suzanne Hill, email: hillsu@email.chop.edu, at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia for linking directions.

EVALUATING INTERVENTION EVIDENCE

The National Public Health Partnership in Australia has released the fourth "tried and tested" version of their Schema for Evaluating Evidence on Public Health Interventions. The Schema is designed to be applied to evidence in the form of a collection of research papers or evaluation reports that examine and describe the effects of an intervention. The aim of this schema is to assist researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to critically appraise published research about public health interventions. The schema is designed as a checklist of questions that a reviewer may wish to consider when assessing the quality of published research, and when assessing the applicability of that research to a policy or practice setting. The schema is intended to assist the systematic appraisal of the strengths, limitations and gaps in published research as evidence. The Schema is available at: <http://hna.ffh.vic.gov.au/nphp/ppi/>

evidence/schema/schema.pdf. Further information: Rebecca Mitchell, Injury Prevention Policy Unit, NSW Health Department, tel: +61 2 9391 9951, fax: +61 2 9391 9579, email: rmitc@doh.health.nsw.gov.au.

FANCY A CUPPA?

This new resource, produced by the Child Accident Prevention Trust to combat cup and mug scalds, comprises a nine minute video, training cards, and a new leaflet for parents and carers and was published in July. Further information: www.capt.org.uk, tel: +44 (0)20 7608 3828.

HOSTING THE 8TH WORLD CONFERENCE

Hot on the heels of the successful 6th world conference in Montreal, the International Committee of WHO Collaborative Centers is seeking candidates to host the 8th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Control in 2006. Taking into account the principle of geographical rotation, proposals from the African or Eastern Mediterranean Region will be especially welcome. Interested parties have to submit detailed proposals for hosting the 2006 Conference, including letters of support and financial commitment, in accordance with the guidelines given obtainable through the secretariat at w.rogmans@consafe.nl. The series of world conferences aims at promoting intersectoral exchange and collaboration among researchers and practitioners throughout the world in order to enhance professional development and increase the impact of research and prevention on safety worldwide.

ADVERT WITHDRAWN ON SAFETY GROUNDS

Following a joint complaint to the Advertising Standards Complaints Board from New Zealand safety organisation SafeKids and the Glass Association of New Zealand a television advert has been withdrawn, reports the Plunket publication *Safety Update*. The advert on New Zealand television station TV3 showed the Pizza Haven Mascot King running into a glass ranch slider door and young children laughing as they watched from the other side. The complaint was upheld on the grounds that the ad did not meet a high standard of social responsibility required for advertisements directed at children. The Board also decided that it portrayed "horrific elements likely to disturb children".

BELLS FOR BIKES?

The UK Department for Transport is undertaking a public consultation on the safe construction of bicycles, including whether they should have a bell to warn pedestrians of their presence. The draft

regulations, if approved, will make reference to an updated British Standard, BS6102, require bike brakes to be correctly adjusted when the bike is sold and for a bell to be fitted. The consultation documents are available through the Department's web site: <http://www.roads.dft.gov.uk/consult/pedbicreg/index.htm>.

VEHICLE OR NOT?

The Segway, the new two wheeled personal scooter or electronic personal assistive mobility device, is creating an uproar in the US as states struggle with whether or not to consider it a motor vehicle. The public health community is concerned about an already overweight population coming up with one more excuse not to walk or bicycle, while injury prevention advocates are worried that Segways on sidewalks will jeopardize pedestrians. They also are concerned about the lack of laws requiring protective gear, training, or age restrictions. Police officers, postal workers, and others are trying out the devices, while many states and communities are considering changing laws to restrict it to or ban it from roadways. Most states do not allow motorized devices, other than wheelchairs, on sidewalks. Five states—New Mexico, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, and South Dakota—have already changed their laws to allow the device to use the sidewalk. Segway lobbyists are encouraging lawmakers in many others to follow suit. At the federal level, a Senate bill would allow the use of the Segway on federally funded sidewalks and trails, as long as state or local regulations permit. The American Academy of Pediatrics has asked Congress to hold off, saying we need to study the risks of injury to pedestrians, and also wanting legislators to consider age requirements, licensing and requiring helmet and other safety gear use. See <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/washing/scooters.htm>. Consumer groups have also urged a slow down until safety hearings have been held. The Center for Injury Research and Policy at Columbus Children's Hospital has lots more information at: <http://www.injurycenter.org/segway/segway.cfm> as does the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety site, http://www.iihs.org/safety_facts/state_laws/segway.htm.

ROSPA RESOURCES

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has a web site www.youngworker.co.uk useful to anyone with responsibility for young people in the workplace, including work experience coordinators, and young people themselves. The site contains case studies, links to other sites and resources, and

relevant information including risk assessment forms and checklists that can be downloaded. *Active for life* is a falls prevention programme for older people. It includes a CD-Rom for primary health care organisations that provides a framework for producing a falls prevention strategy. In addition, the Active for Life video presents a series of exercises that older people can do to improve their balance and coordination. www.active-for-life.com (tel: Classroom Multimedia on +44 (0)117 940 6409).

WELSH NEWS ON-LINE

The Welsh safety group, CAPIC, is now circulating its news electronically on a regular basis to keep people informed of new additions to its web site, www.capic.org.uk. The updates will complement the twice yearly hard copy of the newsletter. Email Monica Dennis if you wish to receive electronic updates: monica@denwales.freeseerve.co.uk.

LIFESTYLES OF 11–14 YEAR OLDS

The Child Accident Prevention Trust in association with researchers from the universities of Newcastle upon Tyne and Huddersfield have been researching the lifestyles and leisure risk behaviour of 11–14 year olds. The project is now complete and a synopsis of the work can also be downloaded from their web site at www.capt.org.uk/pdfs/capt_risk_doc.pdf. Hard copies of the synopsis can be obtained from Mike Hayes (contact details at the end of news and notes).

SCHOOL TRAVEL RISKS

Children are at far more risk travelling to and from school in private passenger vehicles—especially if a teenage driver is involved—than in school buses, says a new report from the US National Academies' Transportation Research Board. Bicycling and walking also place students at greater risk than travelling by

school bus. National data assessing the risk of different modes of school transportation need to be made available to help parents, students, and officials at the state and local levels make more informed decisions regarding safety, said the committee that wrote the report. Every year, about 800 school age children are killed in motor vehicle crashes in the US during normal school travel hours accounting for about 14% of the 5600 child deaths that occur on the US roads. Of these 800 deaths, only about 2% are school bus related, while 74% occur in private passenger vehicles and 22% are the result of pedestrian or bicycle accidents. More than half of all deaths of children between age 5 and 18 occur during normal school travel hours when a teenager is driving. When students are injured or killed in crashes involving school buses, the link to school travel seems obvious, but when such casualties occur while travelling to and from school by other modes of transportation, the association is often not made. The US Congress asked the National Research Council to study the safety issues posed by all travel modes so that an accurate comparison could be made. The report considered six transportation modes. In assessing buses, the committee looked at school buses as well as public transit buses and motor coach services. Passenger vehicles were divided into two categories, those driven by individuals 19 or older and those driven by operators under 19 years of age, mostly students. Data on pedestrians and bicyclists travelling to and from school also were examined. The dramatic difference in risk across transportation modes at the national level suggests that more can be done to manage and reduce those dangers, the committee said. School districts should facilitate travel by safer modes while working to improve others that are less safe. For example, walking and bicycling could be made safer by

improving sidewalks and protection at street crossings as well as building more bike paths. A dialogue among parents, schools, and other relevant organizations also needs to be established, encouraging collaboration to promote safe practices for students using all modes. To help identify the risks of school travel, the committee developed a risk management framework. This framework should be included among the tools used to make decisions on locations of schools, changes in the amount of student parking provided, or changes in the area serviced by school buses. For example, increasing the distance that students must live from school to qualify for school bus service may save money but it also shifts children to travel modes that are less safe. Alternatively, providing a school bus service for middle school children attending after school activities could reduce the risk of injury and fatality significantly. These examples, however, are based on national averages and do not reflect the variations that exist on a local or school district level. More research and evaluation are needed to provide local decision makers with better guidance on how to reduce school travel risks, the committee said. Copies of *The Relative Risks of School Travel: A National Perspective and Guidance for Local Community Assessment* are available for free on the internet at <http://www.nap.edu>. Printed copies will be available for purchase from the Transportation Research Board; tel. +1 202 334 3213, fax +1 202 334 2519, or email: TRBSales@nas.edu.

Contributors to these news and notes include Joseph Colella, Anara Guard, Peter Jacobsen, Rebecca Mitchell, Barry Pless, Ian Scott, and Amy Zierler. Michael Hayes has edited the contributions. Items for the June 2003 issue, including calendar entries, should be sent to Michael Hayes at the Child Accident Prevention Trust, 18–20 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3HA, UK (fax: +44 (0)20 7608 3674, email: mh@capt.org.uk) by 1 March 2003.