

CHILD SAFETY AND MONITORING

DEVICELITERATURE SURVEY

The protection of children from injury ultimately depends on the actions of adults. We conducted a national telephone survey to assess parental attitudes and understanding of child safety. Parents worried more about kidnapping and drug abuse than about childhood injury. Although well informed about potential injuries to automobile occupants, parents knew little about dangers of pedestrian and bicycle injuries, burns, and drowning. Parents frequently mentioned "being careful" when describing precautions to reduce the risk of unintentional injury rather than mentioning proved safety measures. Parents of lower socioeconomic status demonstrated a more limited understanding of child safety. Physicians were cited as the parents' first choice for information on injury control and child safety. The parents' poor showing indicates (1) the importance of passive interventions and (2) the need for programs to increase parental knowledge of childhood injury and safety.

In order to study child safety in cars, international literature was reviewed with respect to road vehicle transportation for children, with the focus being on the age up to 12 years. The review included literature in English and Swedish. Furthermore, the review was limited to focus on results from Australia, the U.K., the USA and Sweden. To ensure that all children are protected as passengers in cars, several aspects needed to be considered.

Within this study, the focus was, hence, on legal aspects and recommendations, traffic fatalities and serious injuries, the safety consequences for children due to the car development (airbags (SRS) and installation systems), use and misuse of child restraint systems (CRS) regarding medical, technical and user aspects, measurements for improvements, e.g. campaigns and, finally, children with disabilities. The review focused mainly on literature from 1990 until today. The main conclusions were that:

- Available statistics show that rearward facing CRS is a good preventive measure to take for enhancement of traffic safety.
- Impacts from the in-safety development of cars on choosing and mounting safety devices for children were found to be a crucial issue.
- Children exposed to an airbag deployment can be fatally injured, despite being seated in an approved child restraint system.

- In Sweden and the U.K. the level of child restraint usage among infants and small children was found to be at least 95% in the front seat and approximately at the same level in the rear seat. Even though the levels of usage in several countries were high, the level of misuse was alarmingly high (90%).
- The road transportation of children with disabilities was found to be complex and insufficiently described in the literature.

The relationship between parental misuse of alcohol and/or illegal drugs and child maltreatment has received considerable attention in the USA, while comparatively few British studies have been published. In both countries, research suggests that it is a large and growing problem and that it has a significant negative impact on children. This study looks at 50 families with 95 children on the Child Protection Register (CPR) in an inner London area through an examination of files and social workers' rating of parental substance misuse as a child protection concern. Parental substance use, as defined by social workers, was considered by social workers to be a cause for concern in 52% of families. Alcohol (in 24% of families) and heroin (in 16%) were the main substances of concern.