**Association of road traffic injuries with independent mobility of adolescents in a megacity of lower middle income country**

**or**

**Independent mobility increases road injury risks in adolescents in low income, urban settings**

**Background**

The freedom of child/adolescents to move freely in the environment without being accompanied by an adult is known as independent mobility. It has positive impact on physical activity as well as on psychological, social, cognitive and spatial development of a child/adolescent. It is also precursor to future fitness and health. Daily independent mobility of adolescents for schools is window of opportunity to meet recommended daily physical activity.

Walking and cycling have decreased over a period of time as reported in many developed countries because of many reasons (1). Short distances are covered by travelling on cars or any other motorized vehicles. There is unavailability of nearby parks and playgrounds. There is a lack of safe environment both social and physical. Neighbors are unfamiliar to each other. The streets have become motor centric. There are concerns about child and adolescents’ safety.

Adolescents are vulnerable to road traffic injuries (RTIs) which are the leading cause of deaths in adolescents 10-19 years. In 2013, the RTI death count in age 10-19 years was 115,186 globally, out of which 90% occur in developing countries(2). There is higher road traffic fatalities and injuries among pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists in low and middle income countries where the built environment is least likely to be according to needs of vulnerable road users(3).

The work on independent mobility with respect to road traffic injuries among adolescents is really scarce. Previous literature was primarily on road safety related to school trips. Whether independent mobility of adolescents is associated with road traffic injuries is not well established. The study from Auckland showed that adult accompaniment with 5 to 12 years old was associated with reduced pedestrian injury risk(4). The study from India showed no association of road traffic injuries with independent travel of children 11-14 years old(5).

The objective of this study is to determine an association of adolescents’ independent mobility with road traffic injury in an urban city of lower middle-income setting.

References

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