Media accounts of unintentional child injury deaths in New Zealand: a teachable moment?

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Summary: This review of media accounts of fatal unintentional child (0–14 years) injury events in New Zealand analysed reports from the country’s four largest newspapers between 2011 and 2015 by reviewing their completeness and potential to deliver evidence-based injury prevention messages. The evaluation considered the article prominence, presence of prevention messages and case ascertainment for the two leading causes of death (2011 to 2013 only). Over the 5-year review period, the researchers identified 242 media accounts detailing 122 fatal child injury events (133 deaths). The most common causes of injury were transport-related (56%) and drownings (21%). Clear prevention messages were found in only 20% (n=49) of accounts. One-third (33%) of accounts included images and two-thirds (66%) were located within the first 3 pages. Case ascertainment in the media accounts was high for the two most common causes of child fatal unintentional injuries reported: it was complete for all transport deaths and all but 1 drowning.

Comment: See next paper.


Abstract

Independent commentary by Dr. Matire Hardwood

Dr Matire Harwood (Ngapuhi) has worked in Hauora Māori, primary health and rehabilitation settings as clinician and researcher since graduating from Auckland Medical School in 1994. She also holds positions on a number of boards, committees and advisory groups including the Health Research Council. Matire lives in Auckland with her whānau including partner Haunui and two young children Te Rangiura and Waimarie.

Research Review publications are intended for New Zealand health professionals.

Disclaimer: This publication is not intended as a replacement for regular medical education but to assist in the process. The reviews are a summarised interpretation of the published study and reflect the opinion of the writer rather than those of the research group or scientific journal. It is suggested readers review the full trial data before forming a final conclusion on its merits.