

Baby products and injuries in Canada: Is it still an issue?

Robin Skinner MSP¹, Anne-Marie Ugnat PhD¹, Danielle Grenier MD FRCPC²

As a frontline primary health care provider, you reflect on the patients encountered during your last emergency medicine rotation. Many of the injuries seen were related to baby products, and you wonder whether this was also the case in other areas of the country.

To obtain further data on the types of incidents seen in Canada on this important question, the Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program (CPSP) sent a one-time survey on injuries associated with baby products to all CPSP participants (1). The survey focused on the frequency and extent of injuries associated with baby walkers, cribs and strollers. In addition, information on the dissemination and knowledge transfer of the bans/advisories and recalls issued on these products was obtained. The survey was designed in partnership with the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Consumer Product Safety Bureau at Health Canada and the Canadian Paediatric Society.

LEARNING POINTS

- The response rate to the CPSP one-time survey on baby products was 27% (658 responses of 2466 eligible participants). Three per cent of participants reported seeing injuries associated with strollers, baby walkers or cribs.
- Overall, there were 92 reported incidents associated with baby products including some serious injuries as shown below.

Reported incidents (n=92)	Strollers (n=58 [63%])	Baby walkers (n=19 [21%])	Cribs (n=15 [16%])
Concussions	4 (7)	1 (5)	1 (6)
Skull fractures	1 (2)	0 (0)	3 (20)
Upper extremity fractures	2 (3)	0 (0)	1 (6)
Lower extremity fractures	1 (2)	2 (11)	1 (6)
Abrasions/lacerations	16 (27)	5 (26)	2 (13)
Minor injuries	34 (59)	11 (58)	7 (47)

Data presented as n (%), unless otherwise indicated

- In January 2010, Health Canada issued a recall notice for certain stroller models after reports of finger amputations and lacerations were identified in association with specific models (2). In addition, an advisory was also issued reminding Canadians to exercise caution when using strollers with hinge mechanisms (3). Awareness of all respondents to these measures was indicated in the survey as follows:
 - Approximately 53% (352) were aware of the stroller recall;
 - 43% (285) were aware of the stroller advisory;
 - 36% (238) were aware of both the stroller recall and advisory.

Just over 75% of respondents who reported how they learned of the recall and/or the advisory indicated that it was through news media reports (ie, newspaper, radio, television and Internet).

- Baby walkers are banned in Canada. Health Canada's Consumer Product Safety Bureau investigated reports of serious head injuries associated with falls while in baby walkers, which ultimately led to a ban on baby walkers. Since April 2004, it is illegal to import, advertise for sale or sell baby walkers in Canada. It is also illegal to sell baby walkers at garage sales, flea markets or on street corners.
 - 83% (544) of respondents indicated that they were aware of the prohibition of baby walkers.
 - Approximately 40% of those respondents who reported how they learned of the ban indicated that it was through the news media.
- More than 80% of the paediatricians surveyed reported spending time advising parents/caregivers of infants and young children on safety practices in their home; almost two-thirds provided advice on hazards associated with baby products.
 - The majority of respondents (83%) indicated that improved communication of product hazards to paediatric health professionals was necessary.
 - Just over one-half of respondents indicated that 'yes' they required education materials on the selection of safe baby products for their patients, and the majority of these respondents indicated that they would prefer the material to be in the form of a pamphlet/brochure.
- The CPSP survey confirmed that serious injuries associated with strollers, baby walkers and cribs are still occurring in Canada; that recall/advisory notices reached approximately one-half of respondents, while news media seemed more effective; and that frontline health care providers needed more education materials.

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¹Public Health Agency of Canada; ²Canadian Paediatric Society, Ottawa, Ontario

Correspondence: Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program, 2305 St Laurent Boulevard, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 4J8. Telephone 613-526-9397 ext 239, fax 613-526-3332, e-mail cpsp@cps.ca

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