

Helmets reduce the risk of head injuries among skiers and snowboarders by 35 percent

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Helmets reduce the risk of head injury among skiers and snowboarders by 35% with no evidence of an increased risk of neck injury, states an article in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

Some suggest that helmets may increase the risk of neck injury in a crash or fall, particularly in children because of their greater head to body ratio.

Skiing and snowboarding are popular winter activities. Estimates from numerous countries indicate that head injuries account for up to 19% and neck injuries up to 4% of all injuries reported by ski patrols and emergency departments. [Traumatic brain injury](#) is the leading cause of death and serious injury among skiers and snowboarders.

The study, an analysis of 12 studies conducted in Europe, Asia, and North America, found that helmet use in recreational activities is beneficial. However, the authors were unable to determine the design, quality, or fit of the helmets.

"The use of helmets significantly protects against head injuries among [skiers](#) and snowboarders," write Brent Hagel, Alberta Children's Hospital, and coauthors. "Risks of head injury can be reduced by 35%...and between 2 and 5 of every 10 head injuries among helmet users could be prevented."

"Based on this evidence, we encourage helmet use," conclude the authors.

More information: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/doi/10.1503/cmaj.091080

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