

Venetian blinds can cause accidental strangulation

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Dr Mahesh Masand, consultant paediatrician at Dr Grays Hospital in Elgin, Scotland, recounts the day when a 22-month-old girl was rushed to A&E after her mother found the toddler hanging from the looped cord of a Venetian blind in her bedroom. The little girl was kept on a ventilator for three days and discharged with no complications after seven days.

It is extremely fortunate, says Masand that the girl's mother walked into the bedroom when she did, perhaps seconds away from the toddler suffocating to death. Dr Masand has subsequently found out about other cases that have tragically resulted in the death of children in the UK. He says at least 11 Australian children have been accidentally strangled by blind or curtain cords since 2000 and he refers to a claim by an advisor from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents who said "one or two children die each year in the UK in this way."

The author maintains "one cannot stop all accidents happening but at least can limit the chance of their happening" and he is now calling for the industry to redesign their products as a matter of urgency. He argues "there should be a safer way of raising a blind than using a looped cord."

Masand concludes that "survival after hanging injury in childhood is uncommon due to lack of adult presence at the time of hanging ... the focus hence needs to be placed on attempting to prevent the hanging from occurring in the first place."

However, he adds that parents can look into various other safety measures, such as shortening or removing loops, installing tie-down devices that keep loops taut against walls, keeping cords out of reach of [children](#), using a cord tensioning device or cord pulley on walls, and eliminating climbing hazards by moving furniture, including cots, beds, and high chairs, away from windows with looped curtain or blind cords.

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