

Study outlines common risky behaviors of children struck by motor vehicles

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An abstract presented Friday, Oct. 19, at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference and Exhibition in New Orleans highlights the risky behavior of child pedestrians who are struck by cars – including darting into the street, crossing in the middle of the block, and crossing while using an electronic device.

For the abstract, "Risky Behaviors of Pediatric Pedestrians Who are Struck by Motor Vehicles," researchers collected data on all pedestrians who were injured by a motor vehicle and presented to a Level I [trauma center](#) in New York City between 2008 and 2011.

Of the 1,075 patients, 145 (13 percent) were under age 18. When compared with adults, children were more likely to be male (65 percent versus 53 percent), have [head injuries](#) (82 percent versus 73 percent), and discharged without admission (70 percent versus 67 percent).

Children age 6 and younger were most often injured when darting into the street (44 percent) or crossing in the middle of the street (36 percent). For children ages 7 to 12, unsupervised activity accounted for 53 percent of the [accidents](#), followed by mid-block crossing (47 percent) and darting into the street (25 percent). Among teens ages 13 to 17, 88 percent were struck by a [motor vehicle](#) while unsupervised, 32 percent while crossing mid-block, 18 percent while using an electronic device and 14 percent when darting into the street. Just 4 percent of the teen accidents involved alcohol use.

In comparison, 18 percent of the adult accidents were due to pedestrians crossing in the middle of the street, 15 percent to alcohol use and 9 percent to electronic device use.

"While most other research on this type of population looked only at discharge data of those admitted to hospitals, one of the strengths of this study is that it looks at all patients presented to the [emergency department](#)," said study author Nina E. Glass, MD. "While most of the young children in our study were supervised by a parent or guardian, these children still exhibited a lot of [risky behaviors](#) in terms of mid-block crossing and crossing against the signal."

In older children, there was a much higher incidence of using [electronic devices](#), and listening to cellphones or music, than researchers saw in the adult population (18 percent of teens versus 9 percent of adults).

Dr. Glass said that greater parental supervision, and safety tip reminders by pediatricians, could play an important role in preventing child pedestrian accidents.

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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