

# Out of harm's way: Does injury prevention education in schools really work?

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(Medical Xpress)—A team of researchers is to examine whether learning about injury prevention in school really can help to prevent a distressing trip to the A&E department for children and their parents.

Education programmes in schools that teach children how to keep themselves and others out of harm's way are commonplace but, until now, there has never been a comprehensive study into whether they work and offer good value for money to cash-strapped local authorities.

The team from The University of Nottingham's Division of Primary Care and School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy are to conduct a large scale review of previous smaller studies on health and safety lessons in the classroom to compile the evidence on whether such programmes are effective.

The results could help health trusts and local councils to focus precious resources on [injury prevention](#) programmes that are proven to work and provide valuable information on how best to further improve current injury prevention services locally.

Dr Elizabeth Orton in the University's Division of Primary Care said: "Children spend so much of their time in school that it seems an obvious place to deliver injury prevention programmes because, in essence, schools have a captive audience. We know that these programmes are also extremely popular with teachers, pupils and parents."

"However, in reality we don't really know how effective these programmes are in helping children to keep themselves and others safe from harm. Our study will be the first systematic review of its kind to attempt to establish whether these school-based programmes actually work."

More than 135,000 children in England were admitted to hospital following an injury in 2009/10 (the latest figures available from the South West Public Health Observatory).

During their time in school, many children across the UK will receive some kind of education on health and safety issues, everything from the importance of wearing a cycle helmet or a seatbelt to the vital need for smoke alarms in the home.

## **Does injury prevention education work?**

In the city of Nottingham, school children learn to take responsibility for managing their own risk and are taught what to do in an emergency by I.M.P.S (Injury Minimisation Programme for Schools) part-funded by the Nottingham City Primary Care Trust. The programme offers lessons on injury prevention in school to 10 and 11-year-old pupils and

also provides children with the opportunity to visit the emergency department at the Queen's Medical Centre. This aims to set what they have learned in the classroom into a real-life context and also introduces them to the medical setting to reduce anxiety if they ever do need to visit the department following an injury.

The Nottingham researchers are conducting a Cochrane Review—the gold standard in research systematic reviews—and will compare the results of previous studies that have examined the incidence of injuries among children who have received injury prevention education in schools with those who haven't. They will also look at previously unpublished research. The research is being funded in part by NHS Nottingham City.

They hope to identify strong indicators that will tell them whether this type of education works and, if so, which elements work particularly well. They will also compare the costs of providing the different types of programmes covered by the studies.

**More information:** [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-3113.12588](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-3113.12588)

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