

More children sustained injuries during pandemic while participating in activities where helmets were not worn

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Researchers found a significant increase in pediatric injuries sustained while children were engaged in activities where helmets are

recommended—such as bicycling, dirt-biking, skateboarding, snow sports or riding scooters or ATVs—during the COVID-19 pandemic. In many cases, children were not wearing the recommended helmets and sustained serious head injuries, according to the study.

They describe their findings in a study abstract, "Changes in Pediatric Injuries Sustained While Engaged in Activities Where Helmet Usage Is Recommended During the COVID-19 Pandemic," to be presented at the 2022 American Academy of Pediatrics National Conference & Exhibition.

The research analyzes data from two large pediatric trauma centers, finding a trend towards decreased helmet use, increased associated [head injuries](#), and increased neurosurgical consultations.

"The COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant disruption in the daily lives and routines of families in our patient population," said Brent Troy MD, MPH, FAAP. "Our data highlights that this likely contributed to an increase in pediatric injuries for children engaged in activities with recommended helmet usage, such as bicycling and scootering."

The authors found a 37% increase in pediatric injuries between 2018 to 2020 resulting from activities where helmet use is encouraged. In 2020, there were 420 pediatric injuries as compared with 263 injuries reported in 2018.

Within the local hospital-system's pediatric patient population, researchers saw a rate of 1.85 injuries per 10,000 pediatric patients in 2018, as compared to 3.43 injuries per 10,000 pediatric patients during the COVID-19 [pandemic](#). They also noted an increase of head injuries (56 in 2018 to 140 in 2020) and severe head injuries requiring neurosurgical consultation (17 in 2018 to 87 in 2020).

Overall, the increase in injuries seemed most problematic for those that were publicly insured (104 injuries in 2018 to 252 injuries in 2020), according to the abstract.

With children no longer being in [child care](#) or [school](#) due to COVID-19 related closures, [family dynamics](#) were likely altered, resulting in children spending more time at home, where they were able to engage in activities like bicycling, potentially with less supervision than typical. They suggest that more research is needed, with a focus on the increase in Medicaid patient population.

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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