Editorial

Injury prevention: Part 1

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When the Editorial Board selected “Injury Prevention” as the theme for a future issue back in 2003, I don’t think any of us were prepared for the degree of interest in the topic shown by authors. Perhaps it is a reflection of Society President Michael Reineck’s selection of falls prevention as the overall theme of his presidency, or perhaps it is a reflection of overall concern about the topic. Whatever the reason, we are grateful to all the authors for their interest, and particularly to Drs. Corden and Hargarten for their editorial work behind the scenes and their lucid invited editorial (p 9), which provides an excellent overview of injury prevention and the issues associated with it.

Doctor Reineck’s invited editorial introduces the topic of falls prevention (p 7). To support his presidential theme, the Society has created a page on its Web site that contains information and resources on falls prevention: www.wisconsinsocial.org/falls/default.cfm.

Our peer-reviewed section begins with the Mahoney et al. discussion of the startling fact that the mortality rate in Wisconsin elderly following falls is twice the national average! (p 22) While no conclusion for this disparity is reached, the dollar costs of the morbidity and mortality from falls alone warrant the adoption of risk factor questioning, interventions, and anticipatory guidance for people in their “golden years.” Ms. Guilfoyle and Ms. Hale describe the state’s falls prevention program and some interesting county-based falls prevention projects (p 29). Finally, Doctor Britton’s exploration of the epidemiology of pediatric fall injuries (p 33) provides a convenient classification of the groups of injuries along with on-line resources for injury prevention handouts. These may supplement the convenient “tear and copy” sheet “Kids Can’t Fly” (p 36), which every parent should appreciate.

The triad of articles centered around the importance (and lack of use) of booster seats in children 4-8 years old provides compelling evidence that these seats should be encouraged by whatever means we have at our disposal. Doctor Ulrich and her colleagues provide the “how-to-do-it” primer on child seat use (p 37), Dr. Corden estimates the potential benefits of the increased use of booster seats (p 42) and pleads the case for legislative changes to increase their use, and Ms. Pierce (a Wisconsin Medical Society Foundation Summer Fellowship recipient) and her colleagues report the somewhat depressing results of their study of a booster seat giveaway program (p 46).

Doctor McIntosh discusses the barriers to success and the disappointments of Wisconsin’s graduated driver licensing law, which has had limited success in Wisconsin when compared to similar laws in other states (p 52).

Doctor Melzer-Lange and her group describe and discuss the distressing issue of bullying in schools and neighborhoods—1 in 7 students nationally report being victimized! (p 57) And it may be worse in Wisconsin schools. The “Bully Project” of a Milwaukee television station provides some startling information. You may recall that the Journal focused on this topic in volume 101#6 as part of Mark Andrew, MD’s presidential theme. For more information and to access the resource guide that was created for that issue, go to http://www.wisconsinsocial.org/youth_violence/default.cfm.

Doctor Shifflet and his colleagues report an early study utilizing the Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System, which is described by Glysch et al (p 17). Shifflet (p 62) reports the burden of suicide and homicide in children and youth in Wisconsin—approximately 200 annually. Not a pretty picture, but important in helping to trace the multiple factors and designing programs to combat the problem that causes more deaths than cancer and infectious diseases in this age group in our state.

But the topics presented herein do not present a comprehensive view of injury prevention in Wisconsin, and the volume of manuscripts we received has necessitated some restructuring of our editorial calendar (p 11). This issue contains only the first half of the articles we’ve accepted. Our next issue will examine injury prevention in such activities as horseback riding, bicycling, and snowmobile riding. Stay tuned!