Reducing child injury through correct child restraint use – February 2022

Facts:
• In high-income countries, child passengers account for 50% of child traffic deaths. However, risk of death and injury to child passengers is reduced by more than half with optimal child restraint use.
• In Australia, 50% of children travelling in cars have errors in restraint use.

Background:
• We know that the potential for a child car seat to be used incorrectly is more likely to increase over time.
• We hope to address this by exploring what information parents need to help them use their child’s car seats correctly over a long period of time, as their child grows with their car seat.

Aims:
• The overall goal of this three-year project is to resolve outstanding problems that prevent real-world reductions in child passenger injury due to incorrect use of child restraints and inappropriate use of adult belts.
• Specifically, we aim to:
  » Develop novel effective forms of information delivery to ensure parents have the knowledge, skills, and motivation required to use child restraints correctly
  » Develop and validate objective criteria for identifying user-friendly child restraint designs
  » Determine effective forms of information delivery to ensure parents have the knowledge, skills, and motivation required to make accurate decisions about use of adult belts by their children.

Methods:
• This research involves a number of different phases including:
  » A home visit where we will ask parents to install a child car seat and ask questions about which parts are challenging
  » Focus groups that explore parent/caregiver experience with child restraints, what tools and technology would be helpful in making decisions around car seat use; and how to assess whether a child is correctly restrained.
  » A lab visit where we will ask participants to install a convertible car seat (0-4 years) in the forward-facing mode into our car model.

Impact:
• Our previous research estimated that at a population level, a 15% reduction in the prevalence of incorrect restraint use will provide 10% reduction in injury and death in children in crashes.
• This research is essential to ensure effective consumer information to reduce incorrect use of child restraints, resulting in reduced injury risk to children in crashes.

Contact:
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