



SuSTAINz: Supporting Successful Transition to Adult belts In Cars - examining the effectiveness of optimiZed tools – January 2025

FACTS:

- Road trauma is a leading cause of child death and injury in Australia, costing the health system over \$500 million dollars per year.
- In Australia, half of children aged 7-12 are moved out of booster seats before a safe seatbelt fit is achieved, which increases the risk of injury.
- The lack of clear guidance around when to transition children out of booster seats means parents must decide how and when to make the change.

PROJECT CYCLE:

2024 – 2025

PARTNERS:

The George Institute for
Global Health, Australia
UNSW Sydney, Australia
Neuroscience Research
Australia (NeuRA)

SUPPORTERS:

Australian Research
Council (ARC)

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Professor Julie Brown

BACKGROUND:

- Optimal seatbelt use requires alignment between child size, seatbelt, and vehicle geometry, but variations complicate guidance, leading to inappropriate seatbelt use for children ≥ 7 years.
- Current best practice advice for parents to make transition decisions out of the booster seat into the adult seat with seatbelt is the 5-step test.
- Current research indicates that while the 5-step test increases knowledge of good seatbelt fit, it does not significantly improve parental decisions on safe seatbelt use for their children.

AIM:

- To understand the effectiveness of the Enhanced 5-step test in helping parents and carers make safe decisions regarding transitioning a child from using child restraint systems (i.e. booster seats) to using an adult seat with lap/sash belt alone.

METHODS:

- This project uses a randomised controlled trial to compare the Enhanced and original 5-step tests in helping parents make correct seatbelt transition decisions.
- It combines questionnaires, decision-making assessments, and think-aloud protocols to evaluate effectiveness and gain insights into parental cognitive processes and information needs.

IMPACT

- This will be the first randomised evaluation of the effectiveness of the Enhanced 5-step test - a user-centric designed resource to support parents to identify a safe seatbelt fit for their child.
- This research will make fundamental contributions to understanding how to communicate with parents to ensure optimised decision making.

CONTACT:

To find out more about this project, its investigators or The George Institute please contact
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