

Bicycle-related head injuries plummet

The number of bicycle-related injuries among Ontario children is declining, likely because of increased helmet use and parental diligence, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) reports. It says there has been a 12.5% decrease in the number of hospitalizations due to bicycle-related injuries among Ontario children aged 5 to 19. During the same 5-year period, the number of bicycle-related head injuries in that age group dropped by 26%.

The CIHI report, *Injury Hospitalizations*, states that this is related to the 1995 introduction of Ontario's bicycle helmet legislation, which requires children to wear a helmet while riding a bicycle. Alison Macpherson, an injury researcher at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, says research has shown that this type of legislation is "an effective tool." She added that a recent study indicated that the number of children riding bicycles does not decrease because of mandatory helmet legislation (www.injuryprevention.com).

Julian Martalog, a CIHI consultant, says British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have helmet legislation similar to Ontario's. The report also notes an overall drop in the rate of hospitalization for the 5-19 age group in Ontario, from 28.6/100 000 in 1997/98 to 23.6/100 000 in 2001/02, but found little change in the data for other age groups. "We hope [the decrease] is because preventive strategies are having an impact," said Dr. Vincent Grant of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa.

Overall, the report shows that injury-related hospitalizations declined by 7.5% in Ontario in the 5-year period.

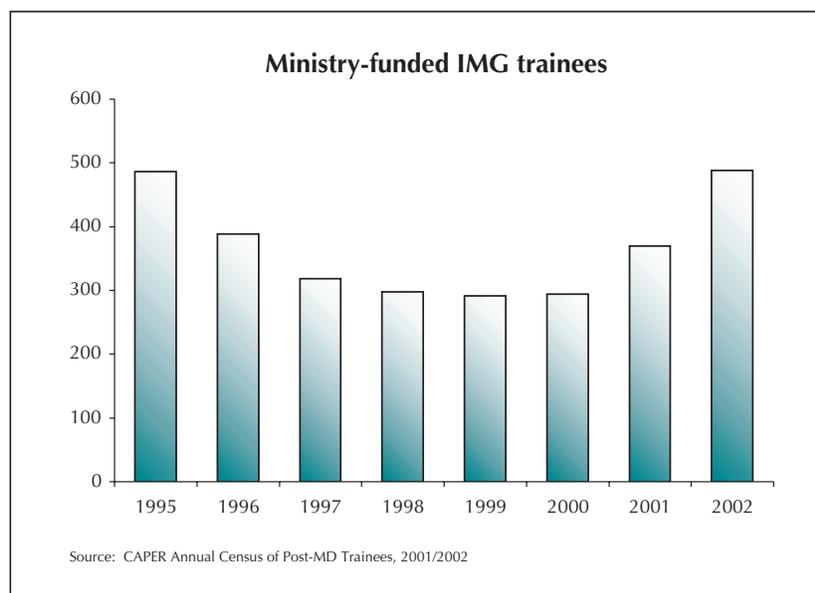
The report indicates that the leading cause of these hospitalizations remains unintentional falls, accounting for 61% of the total. This figure hasn't changed significantly over the last decade, said Martalog. — *Natalie Dunleavy, CMAJ*

PULSE

Trends in post-MD training

Data from the Canadian Post-MD Education Registry (CAPER) indicate that the number of regular ministry-funded post-MD trainees in Canada decreased from 6674 in 1996/97 to a low of 6399 in 2000/01. However, the number increased to 6556 in 2002/03, and more ministry-funded positions are expected to be made available over the next 2 years to accommodate larger numbers of medical school graduates.

The number of trainees who are not funded by a Canadian ministry of health, mostly visa trainees whose training costs are covered by a foreign government, has almost doubled in the last decade, from 1326 in 1993/94 to 2446 in 2002/03. This means that despite the decrease in ministry-funded positions, there was an overall increase in the number of post-MD trainees between 1993 and 2003.



Between 1993/94 and 1999/00, the number of international medical graduates (IMGs) in ministry-funded positions dropped by 63%, from 790 to 291. The number is now rising again, reaching 488 positions in 2002/03.

In 2002/03, 39% of physicians exiting from Canadian post-MD programs were trained in family medicine, a proportion that has been fairly stable since 1997/98. The number of residents choosing to do an extra year of family medicine has almost quadrupled in the past decade, from 40 in 1993/94 to 155 in 2002/03. Of the 155 physicians who opted for an extra year of training, 63% chose emergency medicine. — *Shelley Martin, Lynda Buske, CMA Research Directorate*