

Lap-belt syndrome

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To verify that the Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program was the best venue to achieve the lap-belt syndrome study objectives, a one-time survey was conducted to ensure that paediatricians see children with lap-belt syndrome at some point during their hospitalizations. Results of the 648 responses (29%) confirmed that 150 (22%) paediatricians cared for a child involved in a motor vehicle crash while wearing a lap belt or a lap/shoulder belt. When asked how many, they reported from one to 50, with a mean of 2.2. Forty-seven (7%) paediatricians reported that the child was suffering from a lap-belt syndrome including abdominal injuries (42), lumbar spine injuries (23) and spinal cord involvement (9).

When asked which physicians these children would encounter during their hospital stay, 89% believed they would see an emergentologist, 89% a surgeon, 56% an anesthetist, 53% a paediatric intensivist and 75% a paediatrician; 87% of them believed these children would be seen either by a paediatrician or a paediatric intensivist.

Respondents indicated that patients affected with lap-belt syndrome would either receive care within their institution (62%) or be transferred to a paediatric trauma centre (38%).

While only 29% of the surveys were returned, it is noteworthy that 47 paediatricians reported having taken care of children with lap-belt syndrome in the past year and, in fact, may have taken care of more than one child with these kinds of injuries. It is also very encouraging to see that up to 87% of the children would encounter a paediatrician at some point during their hospitalization.

As a result of these encouraging survey results, the CPSP Steering Committee approved a full two-year study on lap-belt syndrome that began in September 2003.

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