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Gymnastics-Related Injuries Common Among Kids

While gymnastics looks pleasing to the eye and is generally a graceful sport, a new study has said that injuries to kids practicing gymnastics are on the rise.

Analyzing data of children aged between six and seventeen years treated in hospital emergency departments for gymnastics-related injuries between 1990 and 2005, the findings reveal that, on an average nearly 27,000 injuries are reported each year. It also said that during a 16-year-period, 426,000 injuries were reported.

"Many parents do not typically think of gymnastics as a dangerous sport," said Lara McKenzie, senior author of the study and principal investigator in CIRP at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

"In fact, many parents consider it an activity. Yet gymnastics has the same clinical incidence of catastrophic injuries as ice hockey," she added.

About 40 percent of the injuries occurred during school or a place of recreation/sports.

They also found that girls were more likely to have upper extremity injuries, while boys sustained head and neck injuries.

Moreover fractures and dislocations were most common among children aged between six and eleven years, while strains and sprains were more frequent in the age group of twelve to seventeen years.

"Our study suggests prevention and reduction of gymnastics injuries may be achieved by the establishment and universal enforcement of rules and regulations for gymnasts, coaches and spotters," McKenzie added.

The study is published in the April electronic issue of Pediatrics.

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