

## NEWS RELEASE

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# **NEW NATIONAL STUDY EXAMINES BICYCLE-RELATED INJURIES AMONG YOUTH**

*Over 850 children per day being seen in U.S. emergency departments for bicycle-related injuries*

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Although bicycles are a healthy and cost-saving alternative for transportation, automobiles continue to be the only consumer product associated with more childhood injuries. Despite bicycle safety programs and legislative efforts designed to enforce the use of bicycle helmets in some cities and states, an estimated 389,300 children and adolescents 18-years and younger were treated in emergency departments for bicycle-related injuries each year between 1990-2005.

"While the number of injuries decreased slightly over the 16-year study period, in 2005 an average of 850 children per day were seen in emergency departments for bicycle-related injuries," said Tracy Mehan, a research associate at the Center for Injury Research and Policy of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital and author of a new study published in the online issue of *Clinical Pediatrics*. "The magnitude of bicycle-related injuries each year is evidence that prevention of these injuries needs to remain a priority."

Boys experienced higher rates of injury than did girls (7.24 vs. 3.23 injuries per 1,000 children) with boys accounting for 70 percent of all injuries. Boys ages 10 through 14 had the highest injury rate while girls ages 15 through 18 had the lowest.

The most common injuries overall were contusions and abrasions (30 percent), lacerations (30 percent) and fractures (19 percent). The upper and lower extremities were the most frequently injured body regions followed closely by injuries to the face and head.

Although injuries to the head were not the most common injuries, they were some of the most serious injuries. Children who sustained injuries to the head were more than three times as likely to require hospitalization and almost six times more likely to have their injuries result in death than patients with injuries to other parts of the body. While the number of head injuries is decreasing, the study showed that in 2005 alone, nearly 40,000 children and adolescents were treated in emergency departments for bicycle-related head injuries.

"Given the serious nature of this type of injury, continued efforts to decrease the number of head injuries among bicyclists is vital," said study co-author Lara McKenzie, PhD, principal investigator at the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital and a faculty member of The Ohio State University College of Medicine. "Increasing the use of bicycle helmets should be a key strategy in accomplishing this goal."

Data for the study were collected from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), which is operated by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The NEISS dataset provides information on consumer product-related and sports and recreation-related injuries treated in hospital emergency departments across the country.

**The Center for Injury Research and Policy (CIRP)** works globally to reduce injury-related pediatric death and disabilities. With innovative research as its core, CIRP works to continually improve the scientific understanding of the epidemiology, biomechanics, prevention, acute treatment and rehabilitation of injuries. CIRP serves as a pioneer by translating cutting edge injury research into education, advocacy and advances in clinical care. In recognition of CIRP's valuable research, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently named the Center for Injury Research and Policy as one of the 13 centers in the United States to be designated as an Injury Control Research Center. Learn more about The Center for Injury Research and Policy at <http://www.injurycenter.org>.