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New standards to be developed following trampoline safety study

Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick's Dr Chris Mulligan and Neuroscience Research Australia's Dr Julie Brown have begun talks with indoor trampoline park operators and Standards Australia to develop a new set of industry-wide safety guidelines for the popular venues.

This follows a study that investigated the types of injuries resulting from indoor trampoline use in children under the age of 16. The aim of the study, published in *Injury Prevention*, was to help shape and inform a safety code of practice.

The study found that over a six-month period, 40 children reported to the paediatric emergency department at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick. The most common injuries were soft tissue injuries or sprains (55%), and fractured bones (37.5%).

"Unlike domestic trampolines, where the majority of injuries occur from falling off, most trampoline park injuries occur on the trampoline surface itself," says Dr Chris Mulligan. "Contributing factors include multiple bouncers or attempting tricks beyond one's ability as well as facility factors such as falls onto loose or in-built hazards."

The study's authors suggest that different approaches to injury prevention in trampoline parks are required. "The differences in the way trampolines are designed and used require new approaches to injury prevention that engage children, their carers and business owners or operators in order to meet best practice design and management standards."

One important aspect of trampoline use is 'safe bouncing'. "Our study revealed that double bouncing, which occurs when there are multiple users on a trampoline, carried the greatest risk of injury, particularly when small children were jumping with larger peers or adults," says Dr Julie Brown. "While most park operators prohibit double bouncing, the data illustrates that this remains a common hazard."

A secondary concern was the risk-taking and behavioural differences in children using trampoline parks as part of a large group, for example during a school outing or birthday party, without direct adult supervision.

Study authors were keen to point out that play-based physical activity is vital for children's development and creates healthy habits. Taking children to an indoor trampoline park is an incredibly effective way to get children moving while helping them to improve cardiovascular fitness, balance and coordination, the authors said.

"The Australian Trampoline Park Association (ATPA) have built, and continue to improve, a strong relationship with NeuRA researchers and Standards Australia to work towards robust safety guidelines for the Trampoline Park industry," says a spokesperson from the Australian Trampoline Parks Association (ATPA). "The ATPA continue to review and work together as a group to maintain the highest in safety standards."

If you require further information or would like to interview Dr Chris Mulligan please contact Chelsea Hunter at the NeuRA Media Office on 02 9399 1046 or 0403 860 558.