

## **Children and Broken Bones-Help Stop the Epidemic**

Injuries are the leading cause of death in children and teenagers around the world, accounting for 20,000 deaths per year in the United States alone, and more than 70 percent of these deaths are the result of unintentional injuries.

The leading causes of unintentional injuries vary by age and include falls, motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian-related crashes.

Many of these injuries are unintentional and are not fatal accounting for more than 20 million injuries in U.S. annually and costing \$347 billion and resulting in more than 300,000 hospital admissions.

Fortunately, most injuries are preventable by simply modifying the environment (e.g., use of gates in stairs) and use of age-appropriate restraints in motor vehicles (i.e., car seats, booster seats, seat belts).

While there has been attention to injury prevention efforts such as road safety awareness campaigns, the numbers of children suffering from preventable injuries is staggering.

These numbers are highest in low- and middle-income countries where data supports that the prevalence of broken bones in childhood and adolescence from preventable means is twice that of higher income countries.

There are also stark differences in outcomes for pediatric fracture patients in countries with less resources.

In low resource settings, broken bones in children may receive no treatment due to numerous barriers to care, posing a risk of lifelong disability.

For such patients, a loss of physical ability can lead to a host of problems long-term for the individuals, their communities, and society.

The important message is that for many children, broken bones are preventable.

So, on World Pediatric Bone and Joint Day, spare a moment to think of the many children that suffer each year from preventable injuries. Do something today to raise awareness among your circle of friends and contacts that “Children are suffering needlessly!” And, that we should all take measures to ensure a safe environment for them and continue to advocate for road safety, safety in youth sports, and safety in recreational activities.