

Beliefs and Practices of Farm Parents to Prevent Child Injury



Rachael Rol
University of Wisconsin -
Madison

Rachael N. Rol, Josie Rudolphi

National Farm Medicine Center

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Background: About every three days, a child is fatally injured on a farm. Despite availability of resources and recommended best practices, children continue to be exposed to the hazards of agricultural environments. Motivations for parents to change their behaviors are unknown. The Extended Parallel Processing Model (EPPM) is a behavior-based model that predicts an individual's likelihood to take action in response to threat. Our objective was to use the EPPM to identify barriers and motivators to child agricultural injury prevention.

Methods: Four focus groups were conducted with farm parents in central Wisconsin (n=12). Questions were structured to explore each component of the EPPM: perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, response efficacy, and self-efficacy. Susceptibility examined the likelihood of child injury, while severity probed the consequences of such an event. Response efficacy included resources used to prevent child injury and self-efficacy was the extent of parental confidence in prevention. These groups were recorded using an MP3 device. Deductive coding was used to assign responses to each category of the EPPM.

Results: Five fathers and seven mothers participated in the focus groups. Perceived susceptibility to agricultural injury was generally low. Perceived severity primarily centered on impact to the family. Response efficacy included supervision by adults, designated safe zones, and previous work experience. Self-efficacy was high among this population to prevent child injury, especially when children remain with them.

Conclusions: Perceived susceptibility and severity of child agricultural injury was generally low among both parents. Additionally, parents had confidence in their ability to prevent child agricultural injury. The lack of perceived threat may be a barrier to implementing safety practices on farms. Interventions to increase susceptibility and severity among farm parents should be tested to determine the impact on behavior.