

Are our young children cared for safely by caregivers at shopping complexes?

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ABSTRACT

Introduction and Objective: Shopping complexes are one of the places frequented by parents and their children. Parents have to be vigilant as shopping complexes may pose various risks to children. The aim of this study was to evaluate the safety monitoring of young children by parents at shopping complexes. **Methodology:** This was a cross-sectional study conducted at randomly selected shopping complexes in Kinta district, Perak. Caregivers of children aged between 1.5 and 5 years were included. Researchers posed as shoppers to observe caregivers' awareness of their children's safety while shopping. Caregiver-child pairs were randomly selected and observed within a range of 10 metres, for 5 minutes. The major safety criteria observed were contact distance and whether the child was within sight of the caregiver. An unsafe behaviour was defined as caregivers being more than one arm's length from their children, and a severely unsafe behaviour was defined as caregivers being out of sight of their children. **Results:** 275 caregiver-child pairs were observed. Of the 275 caregivers observed, 88 (32.0%) demonstrated at least one severely unsafe behaviour, and 17 (6.2%) demonstrated at least one unsafe behaviour. Only 8.4% of the caregivers paid complete attention to their child, while 25.1% were found to be engrossed in their shopping activities, 17.1% made withdrawals from the automated teller machine and 16.0% were engrossed with their mobile devices. Different safety measures were used by caregivers; 48.4% carried their children in their arms, 34.9% held their children's hands, 26.9% used strollers, and 26.2% used a shopping trolley. **Conclusion:** About 1 in 3 children are not cared for safely by caregivers in shopping complexes. Caregivers should be encouraged to use some form of safety measures in shopping complexes, for more effective and safer monitoring of their children.

KEY WORDS:

Children safety, caregivers, shopping complexes

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Association between asthma and obesity with relation to physical activity level among children in Klang Valley

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ABSTRACT

Background And Aims: Obesity and asthma are significant public health problems, both with increasing prevalence in children. The purpose of this study was to determine the association of asthma, obesity and if physical activity plays a role among children in Klang Valley. **Material and Methods:** This was a cross sectional study which involved 210 school children (mean age: 9.5±0 years old). Subjects completed the self-administered International Studies on Asthma and allergy (ISSAC) questionnaire and Physical Activity Question for Older Children (PAQ-C). For ISSAC, 3 or more features of partly controlled asthma present in a week indicated uncontrolled level of asthma. As for PAQ-C, a summary score of 1 indicated low physical activity. Measurement of height and weight were taken. Body Mass Index (BMI) was calculated using BMI-for-age (5-19 years) growth reference chart. **Results:** Our findings showed that 56.7% of the subjects had partly controlled asthma, 77.1% had low physical activity and 38.1% are obese. Spearman correlation test was used to analyse the association between BMI status, level of asthma control and physical activity level. The study revealed a positive correlation between BMI status and level of asthma control ($r=0.853$, $P=0.001$). Physical activity level also had significant correlation with asthma control ($r=0.476$, $P=0.001$) and BMI status ($r=0.723$, $P=0.001$). **Conclusion:** This study suggests that there is an association between these three parameters. Hence, the findings of this study call for development of appropriate intervention programs for asthmatic children in terms of physical activity.