



## Press Release

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## **Survey: 25pc children injured at home were hospitalized** **The Hong Kong Paediatric Foundation urges regular home safety inspection**

There is growing concern of child safety as a result of several severe childhood accidents occurred in last November and December:

- A 5-year old kid bounced over a roof top sofa and fell to the street.
- Fire-fighter rescued a girl whose foot was pinned by a nail.
- A 6-year old girl who had gnawed off a thermometer was sent to the hospital.
- A 2-year old kid fell off from third floor's window.
- A baby was burnt by boiling water.

A latest survey conducted by The Hong Kong Paediatric Foundation (HKPF) has revealed that 25 per cent of children injured at home required hospitalization; yet parents in general failed to prevent it due to ignorance. HKPF urges parents to conduct regular home safety check and not to leave their child at home alone.

HKPF and the Rotary International District 3450 (Hong Kong, Macau & Mongolia) had joined force in conducting a large scale survey of 1,296 parents with at least one child aged below six, during November 2008 and January 2009. The survey has revealed that 61 per cent of the 3 to 6 years old children of the respondents had suffered from home injury, up to an average frequency of 6 times. The ten leading traps for child home injury were: bumping onto objects (48 per cent), mosquito bites (48 per cent), being caught in door (35 per cent), falling on the floor (34 per cent), falling from bed (31 per cent), slipping in bathroom (28 per cent), being choked by food when eating (10 per cent), falling from chair (10 per cent), fighting with siblings and other kids (9 per cent), and being caught by wardrobe door or drawer (8 per cent).

### **Worse times: summer vacation and weekends**

According to the survey, the incidence of home injury was highly related to the period that children stayed at home. Most injuries took place during summer (63 per cent), weekends (66 per cent), and afternoon from 12pm to 5pm (51 per cent).

### **A quarter required medical aid**

The survey found that a quarter of injured children required medical help; 20 per cent had received tests, of which 92% were X-ray; 25 per cent required hospitalization, of which 20 per cent had been hospitalized for at least two times; 21 per cent had received treatment, of which 77 per cent were wound stitching and dressing.

### **Parents were ill-equipped of home safety**

Leaving children at home by themselves is risky for home injury. The survey found that 12 per cent of parents had attempted that before, amongst which 10 per cent did it over 10 times. With regard to responsibility, 47 per cent of parents considered the negligence of care-giver was to blame for the child home injury and should be held responsible. On the other hand, 90 per cent of parents would feel bad about the misfortunes and 44 per cent would be worried about the long term consequence of the injury on their child. Nevertheless, 74 per cent of parents considered that child home injury was preventable, yet admitted that their knowledge of preventing child home injury was general (55 per cent).

### **Parents failed to check the injury black spots**

Although 77 per cent of parents said that they would check the injury black spots regularly, in reality their frequency was not enough. The reasons for not conducting any check were: felt that it is useless (48 per cent) and did not know what high risk spots (32 per cent) were. Most worrying were that only half of parents would keep a fully-equipped first aid box at home, 27 per cent of parents would learn about first aid practice and 1 per cent would teach their child home safety concept. Dr. Chow Chun Bong, *Director of HKPF*, alerted parents to the long-term psychological impact of home injury on children and parents, which should not be ignored.

### **Government should enforce legislation**

According to Dr. Chan Chok-wan, *Chairman of Board of Directors of HKPF*, the 2008 *World Report of the World Health Organization (WHO)* and the *United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)* focuses on child injury prevention, which suggests its significance. As a matter of fact, 70 per cent of child injuries are preventable. HKPF has the following suggestions for the government:

- Establish a children safety council to be responsible for all activities regarding child injury prevention and child safety promotion, as well as child safety policy implementation.
- Establish a child injury surveillance system to monitor the prevalence and the cause of child injury.
- Establish a child safety education center.
- Make leaving child at home alone illegal.
- Establish a safe community in all 18 districts.

HKPF also urges parents to conduct regular inspection of home injury black spots and avoid leaving their child at home alone.

To promote child home safety, HKPF and the Rotary International District 3450 (Hong Kong, Macau & Mongolia) have jointly organized a public education campaign called <Child Home Safety. I Pledge!>, which comprises activities such as <Home Safety Drawing Contest>, <Home Safety Children Fun Day>, <Home Safety Monitoring Seminars> (with the parents and teachers association) and <Home Safety Check List>.

Dr. Albert Wong of the Rotary International District 3450 (Hong Kong, Macau & Mongolia) said that Rotary has organized a multitude of community services at the local and international levels and with special focus on the most valuable asset of the community: children. The 2008-2009 theme for Rotary International is "Make Dreams Real" aiming at reducing child mortality. Dr. Albert Wong hopes that the campaign, participated by many Rotary Clubs in Hong Kong, can help raise public awareness on home safety and minimize child home injury.

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### **Background :**

#### **The Hong Kong Paediatric Foundation**

The Hong Kong Paediatric Foundation is a non-profit organization established by members of The Hong Kong Paediatric Society and social elites 15 years ago, to safeguard the healthy growth of children and to provide relevant public education. Website: [www.hkpf.org.hk](http://www.hkpf.org.hk).

#### **Rotary International**

Rotary is a worldwide organization of more than 1.2 million business, professional, and community leaders. Members of Rotary clubs, known as Rotarians, provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. Website: [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org).

#### **Rotary International District 3450**

Rotary International District 3450 covers Hong Kong, Macau and Mongolia. At present, there are 59 Rotary Clubs and 1,700 members, who together provide over 150 kinds of social services in local and the world every year. Website: [www.rotary3450.org](http://www.rotary3450.org).