

**Research Digest:
Health Promotion**

Lewis, T., DiLillo, D., & Peterson, L. (2004). Parental beliefs regarding developmental benefits of childhood injuries. *American Journal of Health Behavior, 28 (Suppl 1)*, S61-S68.

Parental beliefs were assessed to determine if parents believed that minor childhood injuries play a beneficial role in the development of young children. Parents of 159 children between the ages of 15 to 40 months completed the Injury Attitudes Questionnaire (IAQ). This questionnaire is designed to assess parental beliefs that children are “toughened up” as a result of experiencing minor injuries. The gender of the parent was found to be a main effect; fathers appeared to hold stronger beliefs than mothers that injuries could be developmentally beneficial for their children. This research study discusses the accuracy of these beliefs and their relationship to parental injury-prevention behaviors.

Parenting literature indicates that fathers spend more time engaged in physical activities with their children, whereas mothers interact more with their children through such caregiving behaviors as bathing and feeding. The authors suggest that such contrasting parenting styles may include contrasting beliefs about the value of minor injuries received by their children. The results of the study indicated that the majority of parents supported the view that children learn from their injury experiences. However, parents did not strongly endorse the idea that injuries strengthen or toughen children up. As hypothesized, fathers appeared to more strongly endorse the notion that injuries benefit children by toughening them up or teaching them to avoid future injuries. There did not appear to be a significant child gender effect or a parent gender by child gender interaction in the study.

This Research Digest is a product of the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools. The research presented is a sample of state-of-the-art research conducted in the area of health promotion by faculty at UNL. For more information on the Center, please contact Holly Sexton at hsexton1@unl.edu