

Helmet a 'Must' for Skier Safety

Study Shows Snowboarders and Skiers Reduce Head Injuries With Helmets

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WebMD Health News

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Feb. 1, 2010 -- Wearing helmets significantly reduces the risk of head injuries among skiers and snowboarders, a new study shows.

Reporting in the Feb. 1 issue of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, researchers say helmet use reduces the risk of such injuries by 35%. And contrary to widespread belief, helmets don't increase the risk of neck injury, especially in children, who have greater head-to-body ratios, the researchers say.

The researchers, who analyzed findings from 12 studies done in North America, Europe, and Asia, say it seems clear that helmet use in recreational activities is beneficial.

Kelly Russell MSc, and colleagues from the University of Calgary note that up to 19% of all injuries reported by ski patrol and emergency departments are due to [head injuries](#) and 4% are due to neck injuries.

Traumatic brain injury is the leading cause of death among skiers and snowboarders, the researchers say.

The researchers add, however, that they could not determine the best types of helmet design, as related to quality or fit, necessary to increase safety.

"The use of helmets significantly protects against head injuries among skiers and snowboarders," the researchers write. "Risks of head injury can be reduced by 35 percent."

They conclude that the use of helmets should be strongly encouraged. "Our pooled analysis of evidence suggests [that](#) helmets are effective in reducing the risk of head injury among skiers and snowboarders," the researchers conclude. "We found no significant association between helmet use and an increased risk of neck injury."

They add: "Based on our findings, we encourage the use of helmets among skiers and snowboarders."

In addition, they say, rigorous research is needed to determine which types of helmets offer the best protection against injury.

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Source: <http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/news/20100201/helmet-a-must-for-skier-safety>

The actual Study posted on the **Canadian Medical Association Journal's** web site reveals that this was not a direct study. Instead, the researchers simply collected 387 previous studies published on the web, and then selected just 12 of them, while rejecting 375 others. It sounds like picking and choosing.

See the full text of the study in PDF format at:

<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/rapidpdf/cmaj.091080v1?maxtoshow=&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=helmet&andorexactfulltext=and&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&sortspec=date&resourcetype=HWCIT>

By contrast, see a study on neck injuries among **hockey players**, in a study that was also published on the Canadian Medical Association Journal, but ignored by the meta-study:

<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/abstract/130/7/875?maxtoshow=&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=Helmet+neck+injuries&andorexactfulltext=and&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&sortspec=date&resourcetype=HWCIT>