

# The Safety Measures Against Home Accidents of Mothers of 0-6 Age Group Children and Related Factors

## Abstract

**Background:** It is important that nurses who will provide training and counseling to parents with the aim of preventing home accidents know the knowledge and practices of parents to prevent home accidents.

**Aim:** This study was conducted to determine the level of security measures taken by mothers with children in the 0-6 age group against home accidents and related factors.

**Methods:** The study was carried out in a descriptive design with 188 mothers with children aged 0-6 who were registered to the family health center in a province between May 2019 and February 2020 and applied to the center for any reason. The data were collected with "Child and Family Information Form" and "Scale for Mother's Identification of Safety Measures Against Home Accidents for Children of 0-6 Years Age Group." Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis, and Bonferroni Post Hoc tests.

**Results:** The "Scale for Mother's Identification of Safety Measures Against Home Accidents for Children of 0-6 Years Age Group" mean score of the mothers was  $75.78 \pm 10.73$ . It was determined that 25% of the children had a home accident in the last month, and the most frequent accidents were falling with a rate of 18.6%. There was a statistically significant difference between mothers' level of education, their situations of getting education about the home accidents, and their desire to get education about the home accidents, the part of the house where the child often plays, and the mean scores of mothers of the scale ( $P < .05$ ).

**Conclusion:** As a result, it was determined that the security measures taken by mothers for home accidents were not sufficient. The mothers' level of education, their situations of getting education about the home accidents and their desire to getting education about the home accidents, and the part of the house where the child often plays affected the safety measures against home accidents taken by the mothers. In line with the results of the research, it is recommended to plan and implement a comprehensive education on home accidents for mothers with 0-6 age group children.

**Keywords:** Mother, child, home accidents, safety measures

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## Introduction

Accidents are events that develop suddenly, whose causes and consequences are unpredictable yet preventable.<sup>1</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) defines accident as "unpredictable events that improvise beyond human control which cause physical and mental damage."<sup>2</sup> According to the cause and place of occurrence, accidents are classified as traffic, school, sports, industrial, work, and home accidents.<sup>2</sup> Home accidents are accidents that occur inside the house (living room, kitchen, bathroom, etc.), in its garden, or in its immediate surroundings.<sup>3</sup> Home accidents are an important problem to be considered since they are common, preventable, reduce the quality of life, and cause disability death and disability.<sup>4</sup> According to the data provided by WHO, the most important causes of death and illness in home accidents are falls, poisoning, and burns.<sup>5</sup> Among the most common home accidents in Turkey, there are falls, burns, suffocation, poisoning, stab wounds, and foreign body aspiration.<sup>6</sup>

Although home accidents can be seen in all age groups, the elderly, disabled, and children are in the high-risk group.<sup>7</sup> Since children spend most of their time at home and live in a world made for adults, they fail to grasp many dangers.<sup>6,8,9</sup> The majority of childhood injuries occur at home, which is considered the safest place for them.<sup>10</sup> Children being curious about learning and exploring their environment, imitating the elders around

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them, being open to environmental risks, being mostly on the move, not being conscious of dangers due to their inexperienced state, and their development continuing in many ways can be given as reasons of why children aged 0-6 are at a higher risk of encountering home accidents.<sup>8,11,12</sup>

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data, in the United States, a child dies every hour due to accidents and injuries and more than 50 000 children are hospitalized for accidental injuries every year.<sup>13</sup>

The frequency of home accidents varies according to countries and age groups, and 25% of childhood accidents are home accidents.<sup>3,14</sup> It is known that 18%-25% of all accidents that occur in childhood in Turkey are home accidents.<sup>11,15,16</sup> In Turkey, 45.4% of home accidents occur in children aged 0-6. Application to emergency services due to home accidents is in the second rank after application due to traffic accidents.<sup>11,16</sup>

Since children cannot protect themselves from accidents, it is the responsibility of adults and more frequently of parents to ensure that children live in a safe environment by taking the necessary protective safety measures.<sup>11,15,17</sup> As mothers spend more time with the child and are often close to the child during home accidents, they play a great role in protecting their children from home accidents and taking safety precautions.<sup>11,17,18</sup> To avoid accidents and to live a healthy life is a right for every child.<sup>7,12</sup>

Nurses play an important role in preventing home accidents and minimizing the damage caused by accidents which are the reasons for significant mortality and morbidity in childhood (identifying, eliminating or reducing risk factors, guiding parents about child development by alerting parents about behavioral characteristics of children, and providing training and counseling to families with the purpose of preventing home accidents).<sup>6,17</sup> It is important that nurses, who provide training and counseling to families, especially to mothers, know the risk factors related to home accidents and the knowledge and practices of families about preventing home accidents.<sup>1</sup> It is believed that in the future, this research will contribute to the planning of nurses' educational interventions for the prevention of home accidents and to its prevention.

## Aim

This study was carried out to determine the level of safety measures for home accidents and related factors taken by mothers with children in the 0-6 age group.

## Research Questions

- What is the level of safety measures taken by mothers for home accidents?
- Do sociodemographic characteristics of mothers affect the level of safety measures they take against home accidents?
- Do some characteristics of children affect the level of safety measures taken by mothers against home accidents?

## Materials and Methods

### Type of Research

The research type is descriptive.

### Characteristics of the Research Location

The family health center where the research was conducted is in a neighborhood of the central district of a province in the west side of Turkey, and its population was 24 661 in 2019. In general, the neighborhood consists of families who migrated from different parts of the country, especially from the Eastern Anatolia region, and within the district, it is among the neighborhoods with a low socio-economic level.

### Population and Sample of the Research

The population of the study consists of mothers with children aged 0-6 years registered in a family health center in a province (N ≈ 1500). In order to determine the sample size, the mean score of the scale in the similar study of Özmen et al<sup>19</sup> was taken as a reference. It was found that at least 110 people should be included in the sample when the calculations were made with 95% CI and 80% power. In order to increase the reliability and generalizability of the study, after reaching 110 participants, the collection of data continued and 188 mothers were included in the study. Criteria for including in the study: having a child aged 0-6, volunteering to participate in the study, and having literacy in Turkish.

### Data Collection Tools

The research data were collected with the "Child and Family Information Form" and "Scale for Mother's Identification of Safety Measures Against Home Accidents for Children of 0-6 Years Age Group".

### Child and Family Information Form

The form prepared by the researchers in line with the literature<sup>1,4,11,20</sup> consists of 16 questions in total. In the form, there are 9 questions that include the sociodemographic characteristics of the mothers and the characteristics of home accidents (questions: mother's age, mother's education level, mother's working status, mother's education about home accidents, desire to receive education, number of children in the family, family type, family income level, and social security). In addition, the form includes 7 questions that include some features related to 0-6 age group children (questions: the place where he often plays at home/the part of the house, the situation of having a home accident in the last month, the gender of the child who had a home accident, the type of home accident, the situation of playing with his own toys that are usually age-appropriate, the person who takes care of the child, and the situation of being alone at home during the day).

### Scale for Mother's Identification of Safety Measures Against Home Accidents for Children of 0-6 Years Age Group

The scale developed by Çınar and Görak<sup>20</sup> aims to determine the attitudes of mothers toward safety measures to protect their children from home accidents. The 5-point Likert-type scale has a total of 40 items, 34 positive and 6 negative, scored from 1 to 5. The scores of negative items (6, 9, 23, 26, 30, 40) are calculated by reversing. In the original study of the scale, the Cronbach alpha value was found to be 0.82.<sup>20</sup> In this study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was found to be 0.75. The scores that can be obtained from the scale vary between 40 and 200. The highest score indicates that the mother takes security measures at the highest level to protect her child from home accidents.<sup>20</sup>

### Data Collection

Data were collected between May 2019 and February 2020. Mothers with children aged 0-6 who applied to the family health center for any reason were informed about the study and volunteer ones were included. Data were collected by face-to-face interview method. Data collection forms were answered by the mothers at the time they were convenient. The average time for mothers to answer the forms was 10 minutes.

### Data Evaluation

IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Statistics for Windows, Version 25.0 (IBM SPSS Corp.; Armonk, NY, USA) package program was used to evaluate the data. Data on the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants are shown in numbers (%) and mean  $\pm$  standard deviation. The relationship between the variables in the Child and Family Information Form and the mean scores of the scales were analyzed with Mann-Whitney *U*, Kruskal-Wallis, Bonferroni Post Hoc, and Spearman correlation tests. *P* values  $\leq$  .05 were considered statistically significant.

### Ethical Considerations of the Research

Before starting the research, ethics committee approval was obtained from the Scientific Research Ethics Committee of the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Trakya University with the date of March 11, 2019 and the protocol number TÜTF-BAEK 2019/110. Institutional permission was obtained from the provincial health directorate, dated May 13, 2019 and numbered 93966460-044 for the conduct of the research. For the use of the scale used in the research, permission was obtained via e-mail from the responsible author, who developed the scale. The mothers were informed about the study and their written and verbal consents were obtained. The mothers were informed that no identification information would be requested for this research and that the information obtained would only be used for this research.

### Results

The mean age of the mothers included in the study was  $30.13 \pm 5.60$  years. Of the mothers, 32.4% were high school graduates, 83.5% were not working, 86.7% had a nuclear family, 45.7% had 2 children, 71.3% had income equal to their expenses, and 81.9% had social security. Of the mothers, 61.2% stated that they did not receive any training on home accidents, and 56.4% stated that they wanted to receive training on home accidents (Table 1).

Of the children, 66.5% usually play in the living room, 84% often play with their own toys, 25% of them had a house accident in the last month, 51.1% of the children who had a house accident in the last month were boys, and it was determined that the most frequent accidents occurred in the form of falling with a rate of 18.6%. It was determined that 90.4% of the people who took care of children were mothers, and 14.4% of the children were left alone at home during the day (Table 2). It was found that the mean score of the mothers on the "Scale for Mother's Identification of Safety Measures Against Home Accidents for Children of 0-6 Years Age Group" was  $75.78 \pm 10.73$  (min=52.00, max=105.00).

It was found that the scale mean scores of the mothers with a high school degree or lower education level were significantly higher than the mothers with a university degree ( $P < .05$ ). It was found that the

scale mean scores of the mothers who did not receive education on home accidents and did not want to receive education were higher ( $P < .05$ ).

The scale mean scores of the mothers whose children play in the living room were found to be higher than the mothers whose children play in the kitchen ( $P < .05$ ) (Table 3). There was no significant difference between the mother's working status, family type, family income level, the person who takes care of the child, the child's being alone at home during the day, and the scale mean scores of the mothers ( $P > .05$ ).

### Discussion

In this study, which was conducted to determine the level of safety measures and related factors taken by mothers with children in the 0-6 age group, for home accidents, it was found that the mean score of the mothers on the "Scale for Mother's Identification of Safety Measures Against Home Accidents for Children of 0-6 Years Age Group" was  $75.78 \pm 10.73$  and it was similar to in some studies<sup>12,19</sup> in the literature.

Differently, in a study conducted by Korğali,<sup>21</sup> the scale mean scores of the mothers were reported as  $177.25 \pm 14.62$ , and in a study conducted by Erdem et al.<sup>4</sup> it was reported as  $168.03 \pm 20.49$ . It can be said that this difference is due to the sociocultural characteristics of the region where the research was conducted. Since the scores that can be obtained from the scale can vary between 40 and 200, it can be said that the safety measures taken by the mothers included in this study to protect their children from home accidents are not sufficient. In this study, the inadequacy of the safety measures taken by the mothers for home accidents can be explained by the sociocultural characteristics of the families living in the region where the study was conducted.

In this study, it was found that 1 out of every 4 children had a home accident in the last 1 month (Table 2). When examining the frequency of home accidents in studies conducted with children in the same age group, it was reported 12.8% in the study of Erdem et al.<sup>4</sup> and 15.5% in the study of Özmen et al.<sup>19</sup> In the study conducted by Kamal<sup>22</sup> in Egypt, the frequency of home accidents in children under the age of 5 was found to be 20.6%.

In this study, the frequency of home accidents was found to be higher than the rates of home accidents in the literature. This can be explained by the inadequacy of the safety measures taken by the mothers included in the study for home accidents. It can be said that the children of mothers who do not take adequate safety precautions against home accidents have more frequent home accidents.

In this study, it was determined that among the types of home accidents, falling was the first with 18.6%, followed by burns at 4.8%. Similarly, in some studies, the frequency of falling was reported to be the first among home accident types with different rates such as 46.3%, 95.9%, 87.4%, and 75.4%.<sup>3,7,11</sup> In the study conducted by Korğali,<sup>21</sup> the 3 most common types of home accidents are, respectively, poisoning, falling, and foreign body aspiration. In order to reduce falls, which are common types of home accidents in childhood, Young et al.<sup>23</sup> recommend interventions to prevent falls and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. It is important to educate parents about safety measures to prevent falls, to determine the causes of falls, and to address and implement prevention initiatives specific to the family.

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Mothers and Families (N=188)		
Variables	M ± SD*	
Maternal age (years)	30.13 ± 5.60 (20-47)	
Number of children	N	(%)
1	69	36.7
2	86	45.7
3	29	15.4
4	4	2.2
Education level		
Illiterate	6	3.2
Primary school	47	25.0
Secondary school	44	23.4
High school	61	32.4
University	30	16.0
Working status		
Works at any job	31	16.5
Not working (housewife)	157	83.5
Family type		
Nuclear family	164	87.2
Extended family	24	12.8
Family income status		
Income less than expenses	41	21.8
Income equals expense	134	71.3
Income more than expenses	13	6.9
Social security presence status		
Yes	154	81.9
No	34	18.1
Education status of the mother about home accidents		
Yes	73	38.8
No	115	61.2
The mother's desire to receive education about home accidents		
Yes	106	56.4
No	82	43.6

\*M ± SD=mean ± standard deviation.

In the current research, it was determined that approximately half of the children who had a home accident in the last month were boys (Table 2). This result is also compatible with studies in the literature.<sup>4,24,25</sup> In the literature, when children's injury behaviors are examined, it is known that gender, one of the characteristics of the child, has an effect on injury behaviors.<sup>26</sup> Boys have more frequent home accidents than girls.<sup>27</sup> The following can be given among the reasons why boys have more frequent home accidents than girls: inherited personality traits of boys such as being active, curious, and

liking hard games, the fact that boys can take more risks than girls, the roles of girls and boys created by the environment, and the fact that families display a more protective attitude toward girls and raise boys more freely can be counted.<sup>27</sup> Especially, mothers with boys should be informed about the fact that boys are more at risk for home accidents than girls, the causes of the risk, and precautions.

In this study, it was determined that more than half of the children usually play in the living room (Table 2). In a quasi-experimental study

Table 2. Characteristics of Children Related to Home Accidents (N=188)

	n	(%)
The area where are usually played at home		
Children's room	45	23.9
Kitchen	14	7.4
Living room	125	66.5
Garden	4	2.1
Frequently played material*		
Toys	158	84.0
Household/kitchenware	56	29.8
Technological devices	70	36.7
Parent things	13	6.9
Home accident in the last month		
Yes	47	25.0
No	141	75.0
Gender of the child who had a home accident (n=47)		
Girl	23	48.94
Boy	24	51.06
Type of home accident in the last month**		
Fall	35	18.6
Burn	9	4.8
Foreign body aspiration	1	0.5
Electrical shock	1	0.5
Penetrating tool injury	3	1.6
Finger stuck in door	1	0.5
Person who takes care of the child		
Mother	170	90.4
Family elders	18	9.6
Situation of the child being alone at home during the day		
Yes	27	14.4
No	161	85.6

\*Percentages are given over N. \*\*More than 1 option is marked.

to determine the risks in home accidents and to take precautions against accidents, they reported that the riskiest areas of the home were the kitchen and living room during home visits.<sup>28</sup> In the studies carried out, it was stated that most of the home accidents occurred in the living room section of the house.<sup>1,3,7,21,27</sup> Accordingly, it can be said that playing games in the living room increases the risk of home accidents. In addition, in this study, it was determined that mothers whose children usually play in the living room take a higher level of safety precautions regarding home accidents than mothers whose children usually play in the kitchen (Table 3). The fact that mothers whose children play in the living room take safety precautions at a

higher level can be explained by the fact that mothers take more precautions due to the abundance of materials that increase the risk of accidents in the living room section of the house.

In this study, the level of safety measures taken for home accidents was found to be higher in mothers with high school graduates and lower education levels compared to mothers with university degrees (Table 3). Similarly, Büyük et al<sup>12</sup> found that mothers who graduated from primary, secondary, and high school took higher levels of safety precautions for home accidents compared to mothers with university degrees. In another study, it was reported that mothers who

Table 3. Comparison of Some Characteristics of Mothers and Children and Scale Mean Scores of Mothers (N=188)					
Variables			n	M ± SD*	Test P
Education status of the mother about home accidents					
Yes			73	72.63 ± 10.22	Z=-3.464** P=.001
No			115	77.78 ± 10.61	
The mother's desire to receive education about home accidents					
Yes			106	74.39 ± 10.64	Z=-1.989** P=.047
No			82	77.57 ± 10.65	
Education level					
Illiterate <sup>a</sup>			6	80.83 ± 10.26	$\chi^2=21.070^{***}$ P < .001
Primary school <sup>b</sup>			47	79.91 ± 11.47	
Secondary school <sup>c</sup>			44	76.40 ± 12.22	
High school <sup>d</sup>			61	75.03 ± 8.59	
University <sup>e</sup>			30	68.90 ± 7.62	
Test****	a-b=9.924	P=.674		a-e=65.45	P=.007
	a-c=26.981	P=.254		b-e=55.52	P < .001
	a-d=30.337	P=.192		c-e=38.46	P=.003
	b-c=17.057	P=.135		d-e=35.11	P=.004
	b-d=20.414	P=.053		c-d=33.56	P=.755
			n		Ort ± SS*
The area where the child usually plays at home					
Children's room			45	73.22 ± 8.26	$\chi^2=7.866^{***}$ P=.049
Kitchen			14	71.21 ± 11.11	
Living room			125	77.11 ± 11.29	
Garden			4	79.00 ± 9.59	
Test****				a-b=15.23	P=.36
				a-c=-18.06	P=.05
				a-d=-33.33	P=.24
				b-c=-33.30	P=.03
				b-d=-48.57	P=.11
				c-d=-15.27	P=.58

\*M ± SD=mean ± standard deviation, \*\*Mann-Whitney U-test Z value, \*\*\*Kruskal-Wallis test Chi-Square value, \*\*\*\*Bonferroni Post Hoc test statistical value.

graduated from primary school and high school took a higher level of safety precautions regarding home accidents compared to mothers who graduated from university.<sup>29</sup> Unlike the results of this study, there are studies in the literature showing that as the education level of mothers increases, the level of safety measures they take for home accidents also increases.<sup>27,17</sup> In the study of Şekerci and İnal,<sup>27</sup> it was reported that mothers with secondary school or higher education took higher levels of safety precautions against home accidents than mothers who were illiterate and primary school graduates. In

the study of Çapık and Gürol,<sup>17</sup> it was determined that mothers with a university or higher level of education took higher levels of safety precautions against home accidents than literate, primary, secondary, and high school graduates. It is thought that this difference is due to the environmental and sociocultural differences of the mothers constituting the research groups. In this study, the mothers who are illiterate, primary, secondary, and high school graduates take a higher level of safety precautions regarding home accidents than university graduate mothers. It can be explained by the fact that they have to

take precautions because their home environments have more risks due to their socioeconomic levels. It can also be explained by the fact that university graduate mothers take a more active part in working life, spend limited time with their children, and cannot take adequate safety precautions for home accidents.

In this study, the safety measures taken by mothers who did not receive and did not want to receive education about home accidents were at a higher level (Table 3). Unlike our research findings, in the study of Şekerci and İnal,<sup>27</sup> mothers who received training on home accidents reported a higher level of safety precautions against home accidents than mothers who did not receive education. The high level of safety measures of mothers who did not receive training on home accidents shows that knowledge will be gained not only through formal education but also through informal experiences. In addition, the high security measures of mothers who do not want to receive education support this result.

## Conclusion

In the current study, it was concluded that the safety measures taken by the mothers to protect their children from home accidents were not sufficient. It was determined that the mother's education level, the part of the house where the child often plays, the education status of mothers about home accidents, and the mothers' desire to receive education affect the level of taking safety precautions for home accidents.

In line with these results, it is recommended that health professionals, especially nurses, who interact frequently with children and their families, should educate mothers on the risks associated with home accidents, behavioral and developmental characteristics of children, and safety precautions to be taken for home accidents. It is recommended to use mass media in order to increase the knowledge and awareness of mothers about home accidents and the safety precautions to be taken for home accidents.

**Ethics Committee Approval:** Ethics committee approval was received for this study from Trakya University Dean of Medical School Scientific Research Ethics Committee (March 11, 2019 and number: TÜTF-BAEK 2019/110).

**Informed Consent:** Written and verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants who participated in this study.

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