Children's Pedestrian Route Selection: Efficacy of a Video and Internet Training Protocol.

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Abstract
OBJECTIVE: This randomized controlled trial examined one aspect of child pedestrian behavior, route selection across intersections, to evaluate whether a combination of widely-available videos and websites effectively train children in safe pedestrian route selection compared to active pedestrian safety control training and a no-contact control group.

METHODS: A sample of 231 seven- and eight-year-olds were randomly assigned to one of four groups: training with videos and internet websites, active control groups of individualized streetside training or training within a virtual pedestrian environment, or a no-contact control group. All training groups received six 30-minute training sessions. Pedestrian route selection was assessed using two strategies, vignettes accompanied by illustrations and tabletop models of intersections, on three occasions: prior to intervention group assignment, immediately post-training, and six months after training.

RESULTS: Although there were differences in route selection over time, no time by condition interaction effects were significant (ps > .05), suggesting children in the video/internet training group did not learn pedestrian route selection skills at a rate different from those in the other training groups or those in the no-contact control group.

CONCLUSION: Safe route selection is a critical component of pedestrian safety. Our results suggest children may not learn route selection from widely-available videos or websites. Explanations for the null finding and implications for both research and future practice are discussed.