Reviewer's report

Title: Unintentional Childhood Injury: A Controlled Comparison of Behavioral Characteristics

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Reviewer: Amy Damashek

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Manuscript Review
Journal Title: BMC Pediatrics
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This study used a cross sectional design to compare mental health characteristics between school-aged youth in China who experienced unintentional injuries within the previous year to those who did not. The study also made comparisons between males and females. The results of the study are interesting and extend our knowledge about the relation between behavior problems and child injury to an older age group. One major limitation of the study may be the exclusion of children with “mental illness,” depending on what is meant by that (see below). Other limitations of the manuscript are noted below:

Introduction
1. In the second paragraph, when the authors talk about the prevalence of injuries, they should specify whether they’re referring to medically attended injuries. Minor non-medically attended injuries occur very frequently.

2. The definition of injuries for the present study should be moved to the Methods section. Also, it’s unclear what is meant by “clinical staff.”

Methods
3. The authors should specify the grade levels from which students were recruited and the age range.

4. Line 141 should be omitted.

5. In line 143, the word “Confounding” should be changed to “Demographic.”

6. The sentences beginning on lines 159 and 160 can be omitted.

7. Was there ever more than one caregiver per child included in the study? If more than 1 caregiver attended the school meeting, how was the primary caregiver chosen?

8. The authors mentioned that children with “mental illness” were not included in the study. What is meant by this and how was this assessed? Also, why was this made an exclusion criteria? It seems as if it would limit the study’s findings
because children with a “mental illness” would be those who would likely score in
the higher ranges on the CBCL and indeed might be those who would be more
likely to sustain injuries.

Results

9. Throughout the Results section, the authors should refer to the table that
corresponds to the results that they are discussing.

10. When discussing the bivariate relationships on the top of p. 10, the authors
should note the significant differences between groups.

11. The authors should show all of the variables that were included in the logistic
regression analyses in the table.

12. Some of the CBCL subscales overlap, particularly the externalizing
categories, such as delinquent behavior, aggressive behavior, and hyperactivity.
It might make sense to try combining those categories. Does the CBCL provide a
separate internalizing and externalizing scale? It would be interesting to examine
whether these higher order scales differed between groups. It might make the
results easier to interpret because the individual differences between girls and
boys are somewhat hard to make sense of.

Discussion

13. On p. 12, the authors reported that parents in the injury group were more
highly educated. Table 1 indicates that was only true for the boys but not for the
girls. The authors should qualify their discussion of this.

14. On the top of p. 13, it is unclear what is meant by “unstable emotional
responses.”

15. The authors should discuss why they think that anxiety or depression might
be linked to higher injury risk. Previous research has found that children with
externalizing behavior are at greater risk for injury. This makes sense because
such children are more likely to be impulsive and not to follow rules. However,
why would anxious or depressed children sustain injuries more often?

References

16. Some of the references include authors’ first names, rather than last names.

Tables

17. The authors should make the titles on tables 2 and 3 consistent with each
other.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being
published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.