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## **IAEM advice on prevention of child trampoline injuries**

Garden Trampolines are a popular piece of recreational apparatus in Ireland and their use has become a means of ensuring that children have fun but also keep fit. The injuries associated with trampolines in children have also become increasingly frequent and many victims of such injuries present to Emergency Departments (EDs), particularly during the summer. International evidence suggests that trampoline-associated injuries have doubled in the past decade and elsewhere there have been deaths associated with trampoline use, mainly from head and high spinal cord injuries.

Due to the lack of a national Emergency Department Information System (EDIS), the exact number of trampoline-associated injuries presenting to Irish EDs is not known but we do know the number is increasing. It is estimated that for every child admitted to hospital, 12 are seen and treated in the ED without the need for orthopaedic follow-up. Previous work suggests that up to 40% of children who require orthopaedic involvement will need surgery. Most falls (60%) occur while on the bed of the trampoline not as a result of a fall off the trampoline and are entirely preventable. In 35% of cases the injury was related to the presence of others on the trampoline. The injured child was supervised by an adult in only 40% of cases.

Adults may also sustain or cause trampoline-related injuries particularly when alcohol has been consumed. Because of deaths and serious injuries in the USA, the American Academy of Paediatrics recommends that trampolines not be bought for children and that parents do not allow their children use a trampoline elsewhere. Indeed, the American Medical Association recommends that children not use trampolines, even with adult supervision.

As trampoline use is so common here, IAEM recommends the following minimum safety precautions to make their use safer:

- only one child at a time should use the trampoline;
- children should be supervised by an adult at all times while using the trampoline;
- trampolines should be surrounded by appropriate safety netting to stop both ingress and falls from the trampoline; and
- the trampoline should never be used while under the influence of alcohol.

Following these precautions will reduce, but not eliminate, injuries that otherwise might spoil a child and family's enjoyment of this common recreational activity.

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