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First aid for the under 5s

One of the reasons often given by people for not attempting first aid in emergency situations is a lack of confidence and a fear of doing more harm than good. Yet a Norwegian study on four and five year olds published in BioMed Central's open access journal *Scandinavian Journal of Trauma, Resuscitation and Emergency Medicine* shows that even young children are able to learn and perform basic first aid.

Pre-school children at a kindergarten in Bergen, Norway, were taught first aid using the 'five-finger-rule' system: look at the person, talk to them, touch them to try to wake them up, call emergency services, and lastly, stay and give comfort. The children also learnt how to put each other into recovery position and how to keep an airway open.

Dr Bollig from Department of Surgical Sciences, Haukeland University Hospital, explained, "Two months later the children were still able to work out whether a person was unconscious or asleep and whether an accident victim was breathing. The children could also remember the phone number of the emergency services and accurately describe their location." In a separate test, when one of their teachers pretended to lose consciousness the children acted as a group to put her into recovery position.

Dr Bollig suggested, "First aid training should begin in the kindergarten, via play, and be reinforced throughout school to increase confidence and encourage people to provide first aid should the need arise."

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Notes to Editors

1. Effects of first aid training in the kindergarten – a pilot study

Georg Bollig, Anne G Myklebust, and Kristin Østringen

Scandinavian Journal of Trauma, Resuscitation and Emergency Medicine (in press)

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2. *Scandinavian Journal of Trauma, Resuscitation and Emergency Medicine* (SJTREM) is an open access journal publishing original peer-reviewed research which encompasses all aspects of the epidemiology, etiology, pathophysiology, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and prevention of acute illnesses and trauma.

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