

# Understanding motivators and barriers to parental uptake of child poisoning prevention strategies

*“I felt so guilty”*



CENTRE FOR  
Community  
Child Health



**Murdoch Childrens**  
Research Institute





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# Project investigators

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# Project phases

- Literature review
- Industry consultation
- Parent interviews and focus group discussions

# Project methodology

- Grounded theory approach
- Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions
- Recruitment sources: RCH Emergency Department, Poisons Information Centre, community playgroups
- Maximum variation sampling

# Maximum variation sampling

- 66 parents participated - 3% fathers
- socio demographic diversity
  - parent age: 17 - 40yrs
  - geographic location: inner city, suburban, outer suburban, rural
  - housing: owned, rented, public, parents
  - CALD: China, Middle East, Somalia, Turkey, East Timor, Singapore, South America, UK

# Home Environment

- Storage
- Floor plan
- Home/workplace
- Outdoor areas
- Unusual circumstances
- Grandparents
- Social visits






# Legislative - child resistant containers (CRC)

Expectation of a protective society

Child **resistant** not child proof







*I know he's there. I'm on telephone and I don't think he open it because of safety lid ... but he open it.”  
(Mother of 1yr old boy - bleach)*


*“If I've got any products down low I make sure they've got a safety cap and if they haven't I put them up high, so I still don't take the risk.”  
(Mother of 3.5yr old and 1yr old boys)*



## Parent strategy - restrict access

*“There are more dangerous things in the laundry but they’ve never really taken an interest in the laundry stuff.”*

*(Mother of 3yr old boy and 5 yr old daughter)*



# Parent strategy – child education

*“She’s usually pretty good. You tell her no a few times and she usually stays away.”  
(Mother of 19 month old girl)*

# Parent strategy – Denial

(ability of child)

*“I never thought I would need to lock the cupboard. I never thought he would get up so high.”*

*(Mother of 3 yr old boy - multivitamins)*

# Parent strategy - Denial

(Convenience)

*“Well yeah for something that you want to keep handy and use all the time, you’re not going to go and lock it in a bloody cupboard are you? You’re going to use it and you’re gonna go, ‘yeah I’ll put that away later’ and it’s more likely to sit there because it’s something you’re using frequently.”*

*(Mother of five children)*

# Main sources of poison information

Maternity hospitals

Maternal and Child Health Service

99.96% Vic participation rate 0-1yr,  
90% at 1-2yr, 67% at 2-3yrs

Poisons Information Line 131126

# Main motivator - a poisoning incident!

*“... all he would say was she needs to go to hospital by ambulance immediately, that’s all he kept saying to me ... you just think, God what have I done to her?”*

*(Mother of 3yr old girl - eucalyptus oil)*



# Conclusion

Major barriers to parental uptake of safety measures:

- Storage
- CRCs
- not recognising reality of risk
- not adjusting for unusual circumstances

Major motivator:

- exposure to poisoning incident