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### *The impact of child-resistant containers on the incidence of paraffin (kerosene) ingestion in children*

*A Krug, J.B. Ellis, I.T. Hay, N.F. Mokgabudi, J Robertson*

#### Abstract

The commonest cause of accidental poisoning in the South African black paediatric population is paraffin ingestion. A specifically designed child-resistant container (CRC) was introduced to evaluate whether its use would reduce paraffin ingestion. CRCs were distributed to 20 000 households in the study area (Gelukspan district) and control areas (Lehunutshe district). Health education about paraffin poisoning prevention was given in the study and control areas. The monthly incidence rates of paraffin ingestion were monitored during the 14-month intervention period and were compared with the pre-intervention incidence rates in the study and control areas.

The main finding was that the incidence of paraffin ingestion dropped by 47% in the study area during the intervention period. The circumstances surrounding the cases of paraffin ingestion that still occurred in the study and control areas were investigated using a questionnaire. We recommend that paraffin be sold in CRCs, and suggestions are made for improving the safety of paraffin containers to reduce paraffin poisoning.

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