

THE MODERATING ROLE OF MATERNAL SUPERVISION IN THE  
SOCIAL ECOLOGY OF CHILDREN'S UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

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ABSTRACT

Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for young children in the United States. Gaining a better understanding of the ways in which maternal behaviors relate to children's injuries may help researchers develop effective strategies for preventing childhood injuries. The present study examined whether maternal supervision moderated the relation of child and social-ecological variables (i.e., maternal, intrafamilial, and extrafamilial factors) to children's injuries. The study also examined whether the moderating effects of supervision were due to between-mother differences in typical supervision levels or due to individual mothers' fluctuations in supervision across time periods. Mothers of 170 toddlers were interviewed biweekly about their children's injuries and their supervision over a 6-month period.

Supervision interacted with child gender so that higher supervision predicted lower injury severities for boys but not girls. Supervision also interacted with maternal locus of control and marital satisfaction; however, lower supervision appeared to be protective for children. Findings were due to changes in mothers' time-period-specific supervision levels rather than differences between mothers' typical supervision levels.