

Prevention of wood heater burns in young children – collaboration between the Tasmanian Child Health and Parenting Service and Tasmanian Burns Unit



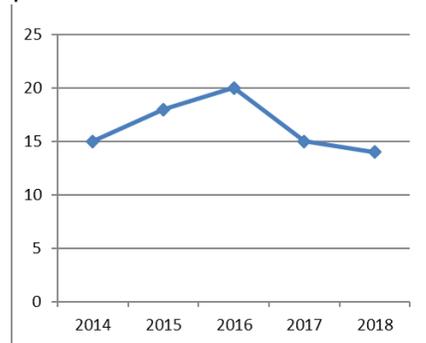
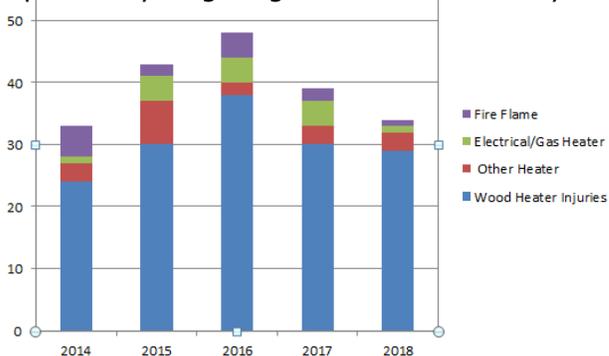
Dr Robyn Gail Kelly¹, Ms Melissa Monk¹, Ms Rebecca Schrale¹ *Child Health and Parenting Service, Tasmania, Australia*

Introduction

A Tasmanian state-wide prevention campaign commencing in April 2017 to decrease wood heater burns in Tasmanian toddlers has resulted in a 21% decrease in the first year of the campaign and a further 3% in the second year.

Background

The Burns Registry of Australia and New Zealand (BRANZ) Annual report (2015-2016) demonstrated that children aged 13-24 months represented 30% of all paediatric burn admissions. Contact burns were the second most common type of burn injury in this age group. Data also showed that the Tasmanian Burns Unit at the Royal Hobart Hospital treated a total of 48 injuries related to heating sources in the home in 2016. 70% of these injuries were wood-heater contact burns, 59% of which were paediatric. Tasmania's low socioeconomic status, cool climate and cost of heating all contribute to the use of wood heaters around the state. The Tasmanian Fire Service and the Tasmanian Burns Unit do yearly media releases around the risk of wood heaters and open fires in the home environment. However, prior to 2017, there was no strategy for burns prevention specifically targeting the 13 month to 3 year population.



Prevention Campaign

The 2017 state-wide initiative was developed in collaboration with the Tasmanian Fire Service and the Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS) and more recently with Kidsafe and Council on the Ageing (COTA) Tasmania. Education regarding wood heater burns, prevention and first aid was provided by the Burns CNC to all CHaPS nursing staff.

A grant from the Kidsafe National Burns Awareness month assisted in the production and modification of posters, brochures and 'Cool for 20' magnets regarding prevention. Resources were adapted this year due to feedback over the three year period, including an awareness of literacy in the Tasmanian population. These materials have now been distributed to over 12,000 families through their local CHaPS nurse at the 6-month Child Health Assessment which is prior to the child crawling, standing and/or walking.



Figure 1: Total number of heater related burns.

Figure Two: The number of wood heater contact burns in the Paediatric population