# Moderating Childhood Safety Beliefs in the Bedouin Community of Southern Israel

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## Objective

The study's main objective was to test the effectiveness of an intervention program wherein Bedouin families from the Negev desert (Southern Israel) were instructed in topics relating to childhood safety in the home environment for the duration of six months. Bedouin families met up with accompanying instructors - who were themselves members of the Bedouin community -- and learned about the principles of beneficial communication. They also received guidelines for appropriate time and space allocation in their interactions with their children.

## Method

In total, 45 participants took part in the reported evaluation study. These were mothers who, prior to and following the intervention program, responded to a specially tailored ordinal scale questionnaire. Among other things, we asked participants about the perceived inevitability of childhood injury and about the dangers of letting their children play outside. Participants were given the option of determining that incorrect statements were "very true" and "true." Since our findings pertain to mothers' reactions to incorrect statements, the correct answers across the parameters examined in this study are "totally untrue" and "untrue."

Ref: Guilfoyle, S. M., Karazsia, B. T., Langkamp, D. L., & Wildman, B. G. (2012). Supervision to prevent childhood unintentional injury: Developmental knowledge and self-efficacy count. Journal of child health care, 16(2), 141-152.

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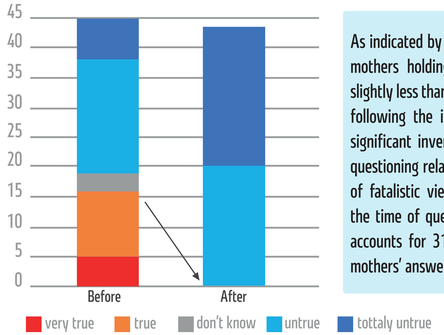
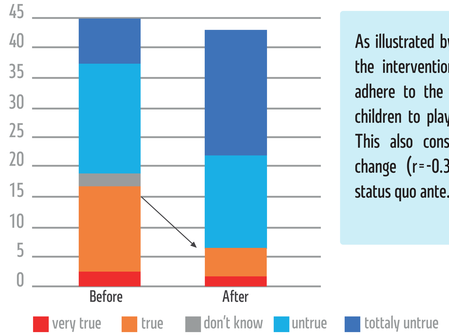
## Figure 1: Child Injury is Inevitable




As indicated by the arrow in Figure 1, the number of mothers holding fatalistic views has shrunk from slightly less than half the group of participants to zero following the intervention. There is a sizable and significant inverse correlation between the time of questioning relative to the intervention and the level of fatalistic views ($r=-0.534$, $p<0.001$). Moreover, the time of questioning relative to the intervention accounts for 31% ($\eta 2 \ =0.31$) of the variance in mothers' answers to this questionnaire item.

## Figure 2: Playing Outside is Dangerous




As illustrated by the arrow in Figure 2, following the intervention only six mothers continued to adhere to the exaggerated belief that allowing children to play outside was in itself dangerous. This also constituted a statistically significant change ($r=-0.375$, $p<0.001$), compared to the status quo ante.

## Takeaway

The main lesson from this study is that the number of mothers who held problematic beliefs about child safety has shrunk dramatically following the intervention. Our study demonstrates the viability of instruction-based intervention programs in changing safety-related attitudes and together with extant work on the attitude-behavior nexus (Guilfoyle, Karazsia, Langkamp, & Wildman, 2012), holds the promise of fostering attitudes conducive to safety behavior.

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