LETTERS

THE IMPORTANCE OF INJURY PREVENTION

It was so encouraging to read the Editor’s Choice, “The Solution Is Injury Prevention,” in the April 2004 issue of the Journal. Those of us working to prevent injuries often encounter the erroneous sentiment Benjamin so eloquently challenges—that injuries are just accidents and do not represent a critical public health problem. Injuries result in more deaths than all other causes combined for people aged 5 to 44 years, yet despite the severity and magnitude of the problem, we continue to work under severe funding constraints with relatively little political will to address the problem and with critical public misunderstanding. Nonetheless, the field has a defensible body of research that supports the effectiveness of policies, technologies, and environmental solutions for preventing both unintentional and intentional injuries.

Injuries are an enormous threat to our communities, a threat for which we have an array of effective prevention strategies. The fact that these strategies are not universally applied should incite public outrage. We applaud the efforts of the American Public Health Association, the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, and all of our local allies to keep injuries on our collective radar screen. Injury prevention requires the implementation of a full spectrum of proven effective strategies, and numerous local, state, and national leaders are prepared to carry this work to its fullest potential. The support of local partners is encouraging. We’ve made great progress over the last few decades in saving lives, and we need to keep pressing on to ensure further success.

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