Date: May 8th, 2024  
Ref.: BTRM-2069084996  
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**Assessment of the Annual Economic Cost of Child Injuries**

**Background**

This study examines the economic cost of child injuries across all their components: emergency care, hospitalization, rehabilitation, temporary/permanent disability, and death. This includes the costs of lost wages of a family member during rehabilitation, disability benefits, medical equipment, nursing services, future income reduction of a disabled child for the remainder of their life, the estimated decreased wellbeing of the injured child and their family due to injury and due to death (damages for “grief, pain and suffering”). The cost calculations were based on various sources, including the Ministry of Health’s price list, data from the National Insurance Institute, legal precedents regarding income loss, hospital data, and the project feasibility procedure developed by the Ministries of Transportation and Finance.

To assess the economic and social value of promoting child safety and preventing child injuries, 2019 was chosen as the representative year due to the completeness of available data for that year and because it preceded the COVID-19 pandemic years (2020-2021), which do not represent the routine behavior of children and the healthcare system.

**Research methods**

To estimate the total direct medical costs associated with emergency treatments for children injured for various reasons, treatment types were divided into five main categories: emergency room visits, hospitalization, rehabilitation, permanent disability, and death. The cost difference varies at each stage of treatment, and this is clearly a significant issue affecting the economy across all age groups and socio-economic clusters. At the same time, the economic burden is regressive, meaning that it increases as income decreases.

**Research results:**

**Total costs**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Damage component** | **Current prices** | **Prices as of January 2024** |
| Emergency room | 170 million NIS | **189 million NIS** |
| Hospitalization | 590 million NIS | **650 million NIS** |
| Rehabilitation | 23.1 million NIS | **25.4 million NIS** |
| Disability | 1,265 million NIS | **1,404 million NIS** |
| Death | 1,134 million NIS | **1,259 million NIS** |
| Total | 3.21 billion NIS | **3.527 billion NIS** |

The research results show that the total annual cost of child injuries is 3.53 billion NIS per year. Children aged birth to 4 years account for 1.83 billion NIS of the total cost, representing 52% of the total injury cost. The cost of child injuries in socio-economic clusters 1-3 is 1.73 billion NIS, constituting 49% of the total injury costs, even though children from these clusters make up only 25% of the child population in Israel. A significant portion of the cost is caused by road accidents, which account for 42% of the total injury cost. The annual economic cost due to child disability resulting from injuries is 31.2 million NIS, with 26.6 million NIS resulting from direct expenses and an additional 4.6 million NIS from lost income for the state.

The total benefits and assistance for each disabled person (nine years of childhood disability and an average of 62 years of adult disability) amount to 361 million NIS, with a discounted cost imposed on the state.

The calculated cumulative cost for children who became disabled in 2019 for the rest of their lives is 1.3 billion shekels (assuming full realization of their rights).

**Summary and conclusions**

This study is pioneering in its field and highlights the need for allocating economic resources to prevent injury as well as developing policies to promote child safety. These measures will reduce future losses, grief, and suffering, and save significant amounts of money for the state. The research results are currently being used to help promote activities for the prevention of unintentional child injuries, which in addition to saving lives, constitute a significant investment in the Israeli economy and Israeli society.