Resident Advocacy to Mitigate Hazards of Button Battery Ingestions

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Background
In collaboration with selected faculty, the Office of Child Advocacy supports pediatric resident education in advocacy and mobilized an evidence-based response to mitigate hazards of button battery ingestions. This resident-driven initiative was launched after a child was referred to the hospital’s Emergency Department for evaluation of a presumed coin ingestion.

Objectives
We aimed to improve industry standards on battery and product manufacturing and labeling and to raise awareness of the dangers of button battery ingestions.

Methods
Over 18 months, the resident’s leadership catalyzed state and national advocacy. We created a national coalition of clinical, consumer, legislative, and industry advocates and collectively developed interventions to increase regulatory, commercial, public and physician awareness for improved industry standards.

Results

Advocacy for Regulation: Following expert testimony to the Senate Commerce Committee by the American Academy of Pediatrics that identified button batteries as an emerging safety hazard, we presented relevant information to the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC).

Advocacy for Industry Collaboration: With support from the CPSC, Underwriters Laboratory and the American Society for Testing Materials are collaborating to create an all-encompassing industry standard to improve battery and electronic product safety.

Advocacy for Product Innovation: Engineers are developing battery and product redesign.

Advocacy for Federal Legislation: We mobilized support for a Senate appropriations bill requiring CPSC to promulgate a mandatory standard for button batteries.


Advocacy for National Dissemination: Traditional and social media outlets were utilized to improve awareness, including the Battery Controlled Campaign launched by Safe Kids Worldwide and Energizer.

Advocacy for International Contribution: The authors are pleased to participate in the Safety 2012 World Conference to present their achievements in promoting button battery safety and to encourage mentorship of physicians-in-training in advocacy.

Significance
Resident mentorship in advocacy can cultivate leadership across the trajectory of lifelong learning.

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