

# Child abuse and neglect in paediatric burns: The majority is caused by neglect and thus preventable

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## Aim

*Investigate the incidence and associated characteristics of negligent burns among children treated at a Dutch burn center.*

## Methods

- **Retrospective cohort** study of all children (0 - 18 years old) with burns treated between **January 2013 - December 2015**
- Neglect: unsafe environment or insufficient supervision
- Non-accidental burns were diagnosed by Child Abuse and Neglect-team or Expert panel

## Results

- N= 330
  - 56% burns due to neglect
  - 42% burns due to an accident
  - 2% inflicted burns
- Neglect was significantly associated with:
  - Hot beverages
  - Young age
  - Occurrence at home
  - Located at anterior trunk and neck

## Discussion

- Most negligent burns occurred due to an underestimation of the danger of the circumstances in combination with an overestimation of the capabilities of the child.
- Neglect is challenging to assess, because of varying circumstances from “transient neglect in an otherwise harmonious family to repeated and more deliberate neglect”.

**Neglect is a major cause of burns in young children and thus preventable.**

**Awareness and educational programs should focus on neglect as cause of burns in children and especially aimed at households.**

