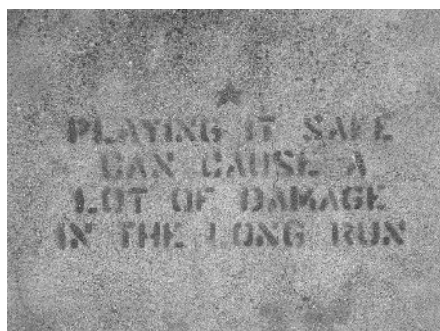


- 31 **Wainwright NWJ**, Surtees PG. Places, people, and their physical and mental functional health. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2003;**58**:333–9.
- 32 **Surtees PG**, Wainwright NWJ, Brayne C. Psychosocial aetiology of chronic disease: a pragmatic approach to the assessment of lifetime affective morbidity in an EPIC component study. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2000;**54**:114–22.
- 33 **Surtees PG**, Wainwright NWJ. The shackles of misfortune: social adversity assessment and representation in a chronic-disease epidemiological setting. *Soc Sci Med* 2007;**64**:95–111.
- 34 **Eriksson M**, Lindström B. Validity of Antonovsky's sense of coherence scale: a systematic review. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2005;**59**:460–6.
- 35 **Rothman KJ**, Greenland S. Precision and validity in epidemiologic studies. In: Rothman KJ, Greenland S, eds. *Modern epidemiology*, 3rd edition. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 1998:115–34.
- 36 **Department of Health**. *Health Survey for England: health and lifestyle indicators for Strategic Health Authorities, 1994–2002*, <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/2004>.
- 37 **Allison KR**, Adlaf EM, Ialomiteanu A, et al. Predictors of health risk behaviours among young adults: analysis of the national population health survey. *Can J Public Health* 1999;**90**:85–9.
- 38 **Surtees PG**, Wainwright NWJ, Khaw KT. Resilience, misfortune and mortality: evidence that sense of coherence is a marker of social stress adaptive capacity. *J Psychosom Res* 2006;**61**:221–7.
- 39 **Joshi KJ**, Hu FB, Manson JE, et al. The effect of fruit and vegetable intake on risk for coronary heart disease. *Ann Intern Med* 2001;**134**:1106–14.
- 40 **Joshi KJ**, Ascherio A, Manson JE, et al. Fruit and vegetable intake in relation to risk of ischemic stroke. *JAMA* 1999;**282**:1233–9.

## THE JECH GALLERY

### Playing it safe



**Figure 1** Social comment sprayed on a wall in an inner suburb of Bristol.

Play has physical, social, emotional and cognitive benefits for children.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that opportunity for spontaneous play may be all that is needed to increase young children's levels of physical activity,<sup>2</sup> an appealing concept in view of our burgeoning, societal obesity epidemics.

Surveys suggest that the vast majority of children enjoy playing outside and would like to do so more.<sup>3</sup> Yet, from a parental stance, our outdoor urban environments are often ridden with hazards such as stranger-danger, traffic speed, gangs and drugs. These issues affect parental licence on children's mobility and are particularly pronounced in more deprived neighbourhoods.<sup>4–5</sup> Debates around “good parenting” are likely to be further fuelled by media hype, different health-orientated values and bad science.

We stumbled across this social comment sprayed on a wall in an inner suburb of Bristol. Its artist has poignantly captured the risk-orientated conundrum faced by parents today. These few stencilled words summarise the complexities of health advocacy for the public health and child development communities. How can we help parents negotiate these swings and roundabouts of modern life, allow children access to positive risk-taking opportunities and achieve the right balance for their child's optimum health and welfare?

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The anonymous artist.

**Jo C Coulson**

Department of Exercise and Health Sciences, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

**Martin Maudsley**

Outdoor Play Development Coordinator, Faculty of Sport, Health and Social Care, University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, UK

Correspondence to: Jo C Coulson, University of Bristol, Department of Exercise, Nutrition and Health Sciences, Centre for Sport, Exercise and Health, Tyndall Avenue, Bristol BS8 1TP, UK; [jo.coulson@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:jo.coulson@bristol.ac.uk)

Funding: not applicable.

Competing interests: None.

### REFERENCES

- 1 **Burdette HL**, Whitaker RC. Resurrecting free play in young children. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 2005;**159**:46–50.
- 2 **Dietz WH**. The obesity epidemic in young children: reduce television viewing and promote playing. *BMJ* 2001;**322**:313–14.
- 3 **Lester S**, Maudsley M. *Play, naturally: a review of children's natural play*. London: The Children's Play Council, 2006, [http://www.playday.org.uk/Upload/1193125\\_play-naturally-playday-2006.pdf](http://www.playday.org.uk/Upload/1193125_play-naturally-playday-2006.pdf) (accessed 18 February 2007).
- 4 **Romero AJ**, Robinson TN, Kraemer HC, et al. Are perceived neighbourhood hazards a barrier to physical activity in children? *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 2001;**155**:1143–8.
- 5 **Weir LA**, Etelson D, Brand DA. Parents' perceptions of neighbourhood safety and children's physical activity. *Prev Med* 2006;**34**:212–17.