

NEWS

Bump in the road for scooter safety

By ALEXANDRA SMITH

FROM quick trips to the shops to longer commutes for medical appointments, motorised scooters have become an increasingly popular way for the elderly to stay mobile, but health experts warn they can also be deadly.

The latest research reveals as many as 700 people are being treated in hospital each year in Australia after accidents on motorised buggies, and at least 62 people have been killed in the past 10 years as a result of riding a mobility scooter.

The consumer watchdog, the NRMA and Choice, yesterday launched a campaign to improve scooter safety.

A commissioner at the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Sarah Court, said the increasing injury rate was a serious concern to health and consumer experts.

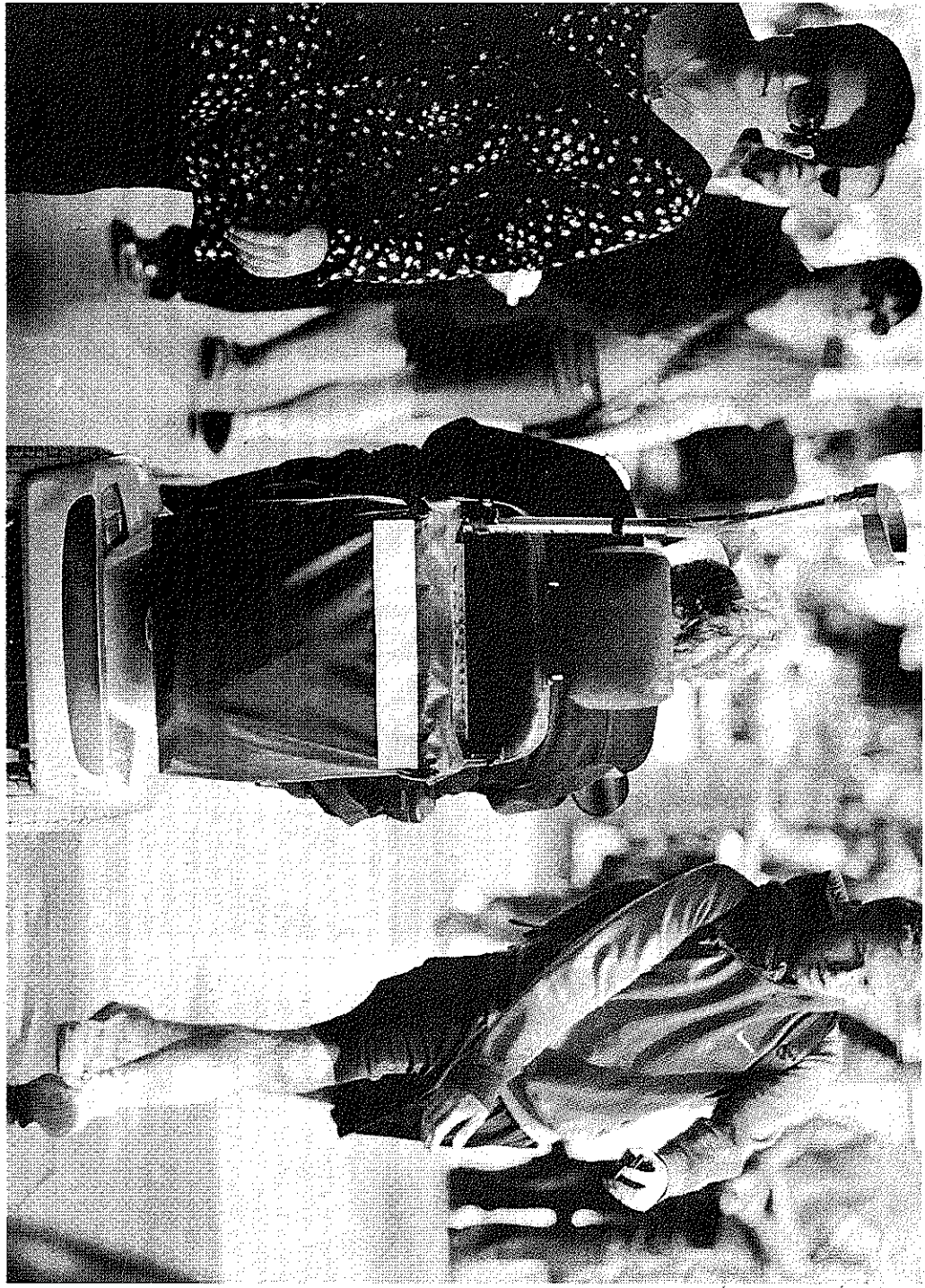
"The simple act of falling off a scooter at home means we are seeing a lot of injuries, especially to the lower limbs," she said.

An analysis of accident data by Monash University's department of forensic medicine showed there were 442 admissions to hospital from scooter falls in two years, but that figure was likely to be closer to 700 because the figures only dealt with falls and did not include collisions.

Injuries to lower limbs and fractures were the most common scooter injuries, the analysis showed, while the most likely location for an injury was on the road, followed by in the home.

There were 62 identified fatalities related to motorised mobility scooters from July 2000 to August 2010 in Australia, and another 14 cases under investigation, with most deaths the result of a collision that caused a head injury.

"The high prevalence of head injuries, particularly among fatalities and serious injury cases, indicates that improved head protection such as the wearing of helmets may warrant further consideration," the Monash study says.



A TOUR OF THE REAL ST PETERSBURG throng of humble folk who...

Mobility aides for the disabled are proving dangerous, with 700 people being treated in hospital annually in Australia.

PICTURE: MICHAEL CLAYTON-JONES

Australia linked to prisoner death

ort points finder at SAS

task force running special forces members and Iranians — were Geneva Conventions," the detaining power