

# Integration of home injuries prevention in practice of architects. A qualitative survey realized near 60 architects in Belgium.

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## ■ Objective

To investigate interest of architects for the security as the place of injury prevention in their achievement of housing site.

## ■ Methods

Setting: French speaking area of Belgium

Design: a qualitative survey with semi directive interviews on the basis of questionnaire.

Participants: a random sample of 60 architects selected on the basis of architects yearbook 1998

Collect data: from 12 until 26 June 2001.

## ■ Results

### > Study population characteristics (n=60)

Characteristic	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	73%
Female	27%
<b>Age (years)</b>	
<35	25%
36-50	52%
+50	23%
<b>Area</b>	
Bruxelles	20%
Brabant wallon	15%
Hainaut	13%
Namur	15%
Luxembourg	15%
Liège	22%
<b>Office size (number of employees)</b>	
1-10	20%
11-50	58%
+50	22%

### > Personal achievement

“Can you tell us about a housing you are satisfied/unsatisfied and why?”

Architects regard as well executed housing when they obtain the best quality-price ratio with a definite budget.

Conversely is architect little satisfied when budgetary constraints restrict his choices.

Architects don't evoke spontaneously security.

### > Strong point that organize architects work

“What strong points organize your work when you begin a new housing?”

Item (spontaneous answer)	Percent (n=60)
Budget	60%
Outline	53%
Listening to client expectations	52%
Coordination with other trade association	38%
Coherence of the project regards to environment	32%
Comfort	30%
Finale achievement	28%
Respect for standards and rules	22%
Security	2%
Other	7%

Security doesn't concern really architects. Achievement of housing is first guided by financial aspect.

“Which elements are you particularly attentive when you realize a project of housing for a family with young children?”

Item (spontaneous answer)	Percent (n=60)
Practicality of house	46%
Security	44%
House which can evolve with family	35%
Appropriate to way of life	19%
Comfort	15%
Respect for agreement concluded with client	11%
Aesthetics/modernity	11%
Aspect	6%
None element in particular	4%
Other	6%

In the concrete case of a family house with young children, security is second preoccupation of architect after functionality.

### > Awareness of home injuries problem

“Which are the risk factors the most important for the house occupants?”

Item (spontaneous answer)	Percent (n=60)
Electrical installation	47%
Fire risk	43%
Stairs	37%
Falls prevention	35%
Windows	20%
Balcony/terrace	18%
Material	17%
Heating system	15%
Kitchen	15%
Opening to outside	13%
Lighting	3%
Building stability	3%
Theft	2%
Bad use of object	2%
Other	5%

There are mainly three fears: fear of various falls, home fittings related risks, fire risks.

Children and older people are recognized them as more exposed to home injuries.

### > Responsibility faced with the home injury prevention

“In a housing site, who is the responsible regards to the home injuries prevention?”

Item (assisted answer)	Percent (n=60)
Owner	73%
Coordinator security and health	68%
Architect	63%
Political authorities	47%
Building contractor	38%

Owner is considered by architects as being responsible regards to home injuries prevention.

“For which criteria could your architect work play a preventive role?”

Item (assisted answer)	Percent (n=60)
Security towards falls	98%
Suspicious material related security	88%
Place of opening to outside	87%
Lighting danger zones	85%
Guides system installation	81%
Functional security	75%
Place of socket	68%
Access limitation to some zones	67%
Place of radiator	53%
Place of house towards the road	41%

Fundamentally, architect feels responsible of home injury prevention.

He sees himself as responsible to install elements that will allow prevent injuries.

### > Knowledge of standards, rules and recommendations

“Do you know standards, rules and recommendations as regards home injury prevention?”

Yes: 57% - No: 43%

Knowledge as regards home injury prevention is about electrical installation (66%), fire prevention (29%).

Concerning other field, architects think that rules are within the competence of technicians and specialists.

## Conclusions :

Study shows that integration of home injuries prevention in practices of architects isn't established.

Architects are quite sure that security is completely integrated into their work because it's tacit in all their work. However, architects are open and they agree to call into question their prejudice

Furthermore, rules are omnipresent in the problem and seem both to reassure and to irritate architects.