



Sunday, 16 August, 2015

CPR Saving More Children From Drowning

The first study to look at near drowning data from the three NSW paediatric hospitals has found impressive rates of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) with 90% of children who needed CPR receiving it following a near drowning.

The NSW Study of Drowning and Near Drowning in Children (0-16), has analysed hospital presentations and admissions from near drowning and interviewed 60 families from The Children's Hospital at Westmead, Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and John Hunter Children's Hospital.

"Most of these children – 90% - were given CPR immediately after the near drowning," said Professor Danny Cass, Trauma Surgeon at The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

"Early CPR has been shown to contribute to greater survival rates with four times as many positive health outcomes. For many years the community has been told any form of CPR is better than no form of CPR and it is heartening to see the message getting through.

"This high rate of CPR may well have contributed to the decrease in drowning deaths and why we have seen an increase in near drowning.

"Children still account for the highest rates of drowning with the most common age group 0-4 years and backyard swimming pools, including inflatable and portable pools, the biggest risks.

"Pool fencing and supervision are the keys for parents wanting to protect their children. We hope that we can help protect parents from learning first-hand how kids can drown without a sound," he said.

Other findings of the study include:

- 48% of all the children previously had swimming lessons. While lessons are important, they will not prevent children from drowning
- 56% of children 0-4 who had a near drowning in a backyard pool were let into the pool area by a parent/carer and then experienced a near drowning due to a lapse in supervision
- 22% of children 0-4 who had a near drowning in a backyard pool gained access to swimming pool through a propped-open gate

The NSW Study of Drowning and Near Drowning in Children (0-16) by Kids Health and The Centre for Trauma Care, Prevention, Education and Research at The Children's Hospital at Westmead was funded by the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services Water Safety Black Spots Fund.

Visit <http://kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/projects/drowning-prevention>

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