

Analysis of Florida Pool Drowning Deaths in Young Children

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Objective

To identify key factors for pool drowning prevention messages in young children.

Background

- Florida had the highest drowning death rate in the United States for children ages 1-4 years (8.9/100,000) during 1999-2003
- During 1999-2003, there were 356 unintentional drowning deaths recorded
- Swimming pool drownings are the most common (68%)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WISQARS, 2003

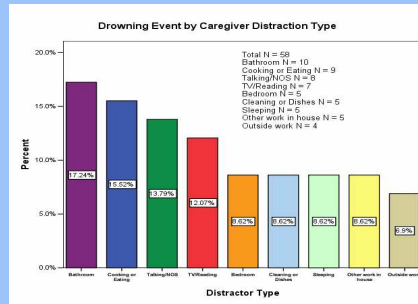
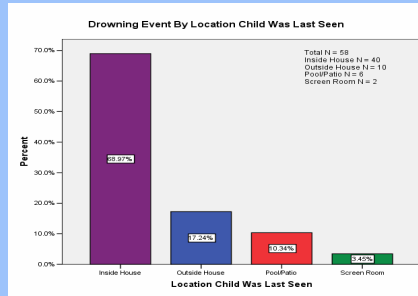
Methods

- Case series study from 2003-2006 based on epidemiologic investigations conducted by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)
- CPSC epidemiologic investigations included multiple data sources: law enforcement investigations, medical examiner reports, personal or telephone interviews with survivor families, visits to event location, newspaper accounts and information from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS)
- All deaths classified as "accidental drowning" or "complications from drowning" in pools
- Data analysis: SPSS version 13

Demographic Results

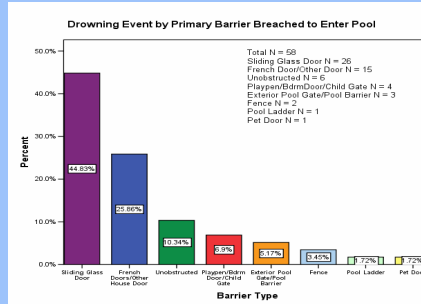
- N = 58 decedents
 - 44 were from 2005, representing 98% of vital statistics pool deaths for that year
- Decedents ranged from 9 to 61 months of age (median: 24.5 months)
- 67% were males
- 62% were White Non-Hispanic, 24% Black Non-Hispanic, 10% Hispanic, 4% other
- 91% were Florida residents

Results Related to the Drowning Event



Primary Caregiver at time of Event

Caregiver	Frequency	Percent
Mother	19	32.8%
Father	9	15.5%
Grandparent	7	12.1%
Two Adult Relatives	6	10.3%
Aunt/Uncle/Cousin	5	8.6%
Mother and Father	4	6.9%
Juvenile(s)	4	6.9%
Babysitter	2	3.4%
Maid	1	1.7%
Mother's Boyfriend	1	1.7%



Other Results

- 81% of drownings occurred in in-ground pools
- The typical seasonal pattern associated with recreational water deaths was not evident
- 19% had "murky" pool conditions
 - In a few cases, this delayed finding the child due to low or no visibility within pool
- 31% had toys or swim gear in pool
- 69% of decedents were from 2 parent families
- 93% were able to walk
- 29% had some kind of warning event
- In 83%, the median amount of time the child was estimated to be missing was 11-12 minutes

Other Results

- 86% of decedents were healthy
 - 12% had some type of chronic or acute illness
- Only one child was noted to have been a swimmer
 - Not documented in 40% of cases
- 76% of deaths occurred within 24 hours of drowning event
- Alcohol and drugs were not noted to be a factor in any of the events
- 12% of events occurred during a gathering or party
- 17% of homes where the drowning occurred had hurricane damage, but this was not directly causal

Key Summary Points

- Primary barrier breached in 71% of events was a door
 - Sliding glass door, French door, other house door
- Even when appropriate barriers are in place, safety precautions are not always observed
- Most drownings occurred within a matter of minutes while caregiver was engaged in some type of routine activity within the home

Prevention Strategies

- "Keep Your Eyes on the Kids"
- FDOH Office of Injury Prevention (OIP) campaign in May – June 2006 and 2007 in conjunction with county health departments, Children's Medical Services, and Safe Kids coalitions
 - Message: Supervise children near water
- FDOH OIP has partnership with Denny's Restaurants to promote child safety
- FDOH OIP is working with traditional and non-traditional partners at the state and local levels to prevent toddler drownings

Water Watcher Tag

Water Watcher Pledge

To help protect children from drowning, I will...

- Constantly watch the children who are in or near water and keep them within reach.
- Give this tag to another adult who agrees to actively watch the children if I need to leave for any reason.
- Make sure rescue equipment is easily accessible. Keep telephone and emergency numbers near me.
- Latch gates, lock doors, use alarms and create two or more barriers to the pool, spa, or any water.
- Once I leave the water, I will make sure a child cannot return without my knowledge.

Drowning is silent and fast. Supervision is your child's best protection.

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