

Drowning

Drowning is a critical and potentially life-threatening event that occurs when a person's airway is blocked by water, leading to a lack of oxygen and, if not promptly treated, death. It is a significant public health concern and a common cause of unintentional injury and death, especially among children and young adults. Here are some important points to understand about drowning:

Definition: Drowning is the process of experiencing respiratory impairment due to immersion or submersion in a liquid, usually water. It can occur in various settings, including swimming pools, rivers, lakes, oceans, bathtubs, and even small containers of water.

Drowning Incidents: Drowning incidents can be classified into non-fatal and fatal. Non-fatal drownings may result in severe health consequences, including brain damage and long-term disabilities. Fatal drownings, on the other hand, lead to death.

Risk Factors: Several risk factors can increase the likelihood of drowning, including inadequate supervision, lack of swimming skills, alcohol or drug use, and certain medical conditions. Children, particularly those between the ages of 1 and 4, are at a higher risk.

Prevention: Drowning is largely preventable through various measures, including proper adult supervision of children near water, swimming lessons, learning basic water safety skills, using life jackets, installing pool barriers, and being cautious around natural bodies of water.

Dry Drowning and Secondary Drowning: These terms refer to rare but serious conditions that can occur after a near-drowning incident. Dry drowning involves a sudden, severe reaction to inhaling water that can happen hours later. Secondary drowning is a delayed inflammatory response to water entering the lungs, which can also occur hours to days after a water-related incident.

Rescue and Treatment: In case of a drowning incident, immediate rescue and resuscitation are critical. Performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and calling for emergency medical help can significantly improve the chances of survival.

Global Impact: Drowning is a global health issue, and the burden is higher in low- and middle-income countries due to factors like lack of access to water safety education and barriers in aquatic facilities.

Awareness and Education: Many organizations and authorities advocate for water safety and drowning prevention through awareness campaigns, educational programs, and policy initiatives. It is essential for individuals and communities to be informed about the risks and prevention strategies.

Remember that water-related activities can be enjoyable, but safety should always be a top priority. Learning how to swim, practicing water safety, and being vigilant, especially when children are around water, can help reduce the incidence of drowning and save lives.

Clinically important traumatic injuries in children with drowning are rare. Further studies are needed to guide the optimal utilization of radiographic studies in this population ¹⁾

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Kemal S, Ramgopal S, Macy ML. Traumatic Injuries and Radiographic Study Utilization Among Children With Drowning Presenting to U.S. Pediatric Hospitals. Acad Pediatr. 2023 Sep

22:S1876-2859(23)00360-1. doi: 10.1016/j.acap.2023.09.009. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 37743013.

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