

Editorial: International Definition In Submersion – Immersion Injuries

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Citation

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Abstract

In this issue of The Internet Journal of Health There is report from West Africa on Submersion-immersion injuries in Children [1, 2]. Drowning as expected affects all age groups throughout the world, but certain groups are particularly vulnerable. Over half of the global mortality occurs among children less than 15 years of age, hence the importance of this paper [2].

There is an established view that drowning is a major global public health problem [3]. The editor discussed with the first author Dr van Beeck to have an editorial based on his work and he consented graciously.

Dr van Beeck stated in his important paper the story of the adapted solutions for (The global burden of drowning) in the following summary [3] as “Effective prevention of this type of injury requires worldwide health programmes and policies to address the known risk factors.” Surveillance, however, has been hampered by the lack of a uniform and internationally accepted definition that permits all relevant cases to be counted. To develop a new definition, an international consensus. To improve surveillance, a simple but comprehensive definition is needed. Within the framework of the first World Congress on Drowning (WCOD), held in Amsterdam, Netherlands in 2002, such a definition was developed by means of a consensus procedure procedure was conducted. Experts in clinical medicine, injury epidemiology, prevention and rescue from all over the world participated in a series of “electronic” discussions and face-to-face workshops. The suitability of previous definitions and the major requirements of a new definition were intensely debated. The consensus was that the new definition should include both cases of fatal and nonfatal drowning. After considerable dialogue and debate, the

following definition was adopted: “Drowning is the process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/immersion in liquid.” Drowning outcomes should be classified as: death, morbidity, and no morbidity. There was also consensus that the terms wet, dry, active, passive, silent, and secondary drowning should no longer be used. Thus a simple, comprehensive, and internationally accepted definition of drowning has been developed. Its use should support future activities in drowning surveillance worldwide, and lead to more reliable and comprehensive epidemiological information on this global, and frequently preventable, public health problem.”

WCOD rationales, values and debate can be studied directly online [4, 5]. It would be appropriate that emerging reports on this topic to follow policies of surveillance.

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