

Drowning Risk and Prevention in Minority Communities

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World Water Safety Conference and Exhibition

Learning Outcomes

- Understand some of the issues that immigrant communities have related to water safety.
- Identify three beliefs that impact drowning risk among the Vietnamese community.
- List at least two ways to incorporate focus group findings into targeted interventions

The Problem

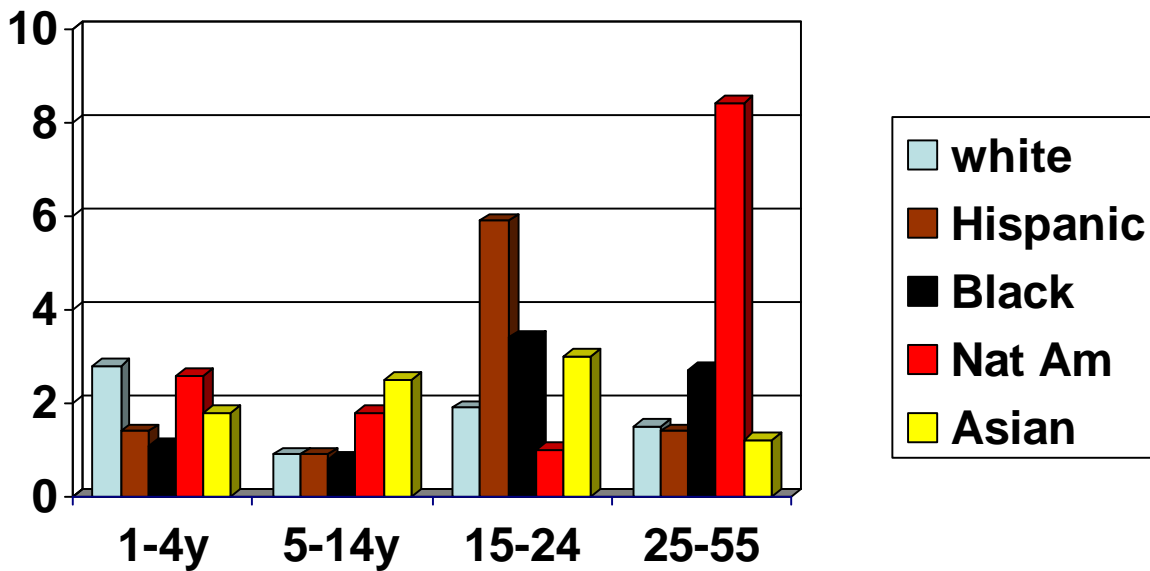
- Drowning is the second leading cause of injury death for Washington Children ages 1-17
- Asian children (0-17 years) represent 12.6% of the drownings but comprise 6.9% of the population

Drowning rates 0-17 year olds WA State 1999-2003

<u>Race</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Rate/100,000</u>	<u>95% CI</u>
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White	98	77%	6516787	1.5	1.2, 1.8
Black	8	6%	397767	2.0	0.8, 4.0
Nat Am	5	4%	172177	2.9	1.0, 6.8
Asian/Pac	16	12.6%	510029	3.1	1.8, 5.1
Hispanic	13	10%	919233	1.4	0.8, 2.4

WA State drowning rates in different Ethnic groups by Age, 1999-2003



What are the knowledge, behaviors, and beliefs around water?

- Met with community leaders
- Conducted four focus groups in Vietnamese with
 - Parents
 - Adolescents (14-18)

Focus groups:

Knowledge about water risks

- Low awareness of drowning data/risk
- Mixed awareness regarding cold water
- Poor awareness of local waters
- Most Vietnamese parents do not know how to swim or are poor swimmers
- Swimming is not a recreation in Vietnam

Focus groups:

Beliefs: Why drownings happen

- Fate, bad luck, “your time to go”
- “Ghosts pull you down”
 - Teens call parents superstitious

Focus groups:

Teen behaviors around water

- Huge peer pressure (even if don't know how to swim)
- Overconfident around water
- “Vietnamese cultural values and mentality contribute to reckless attitude, disregarding safety rules”

Focus groups: Supervision

- Supervision of children is more passive than active: “watching”
- Safety is in groups in water activities; adult supervision not needed
- Lifeguards are too busy to provide safety

Focus groups:

Swimming lessons, swimming pools

- Swimming lessons and pools are too expensive
- Children can swim alone when old enough to be home alone or can swim
- “American” kids learn to swim earlier as preschoolers; have better swim skills than Vietnamese kids
- Start swim lessons when reach school age

Focus groups: **Life Jackets**

- If you know how to swim, you don't need a life jacket
- Do not use life jackets except on boat if required
- Life jackets are life saving-but not necessary (worn because it is the law)
- Life jackets are bulky, uncomfortable, restrictive, unstylish
- Teens liked inflatable life jackets when shown

Focus groups: **What Vietnamese families and teens wanted**

Skills:

- Skills to evaluate water
- Water safety combined with swimming lessons

Infrastructure in place/needed:

- Age/language specific classes
- Free swim classes (incentive)

Focus groups: **Limitations**

- Refugee or new immigrant family reluctance to sign papers or participate in a program they do not understand
- Discomfort talking about personal issues in front of strangers
- Cultural pressure to give the “right” answer
- Differing perspectives between recent immigrants and families who have lived in the United States longer

Focus groups: **Summary**

- Lack experience
- Lack skills- economic
- Unsafe practices: supervision
- Similarities to dominant culture: peer pressure, fate
- Cultural differences: superstition
- Implications
 - Need a community approach: Parent and Teen
 - Need to also change the dominant culture’s practices
 - Messages, interventions need to be language specific

Intervention Project in the Vietnamese Community: Objectives

To decrease drownings among high risk, ethnically diverse groups, specifically Vietnamese-American children

- Increase water safety awareness
- Increase recreational water skills
 - swimming lessons, recognition of open water hazards
- Increase safe behaviors
 - Use of life guarded sites, life jackets

Baseline Survey Results

Graphs will go in this spot of the presentation

Increase awareness

- Develop key safety messages and information packets (life guarded beaches, pools)
- Disseminate them via
 - Informational sessions with key community leaders, organizations, and large groups (churches/temples)
 - Vietnamese newspapers and radio
 - Posters and flyers at community sites (grocery stores, restaurants, community centers)
 - Seattle Parks website

Key Messages

- Swim in a life guarded area
- Wear a life jacket
- Learn to swim

Increase skills

- Increase swimming skills
 - Increase use of school voucher for free lessons by including an introductory letter in Vietnamese
 - Increase use of swimming pools:
 - Make swimming pools more inviting
 - Recruit more Asians for life guarding jobs
 - Hold family swim sessions at pools, including a water safety segment
- Increase skills around open water
 - Develop an open water safety session
 - Pilot it in Vietnamese

Increase safe behaviors

- Encourage use of life guarded sites
 - Extend evening hours of life guarding
 - Translate and disseminate the hours and location of life guarded pools and beaches
- Increase life jacket use
 - Translate and post information in Vietnamese about the life jacket loaner program at each local public beach site
 - Include life jacket sales and coupon distribution at swim lessons

Partners

- King County Drowning Prevention Coalition
- Seattle Parks Department Aquatics Division
- Public Health Seattle & King County
- Seattle Mayor's Office of Diversity

- Injury Free Coalition for Kids – Seattle
- Children's Hospital & Regional Medical Center
- Regence BlueShield
- Local Vietnamese grocers, businesses
- Vietnamese churches
- Vietnamese Professionals Society

How we will evaluate the project

- A. Number of attendees at life guarded beaches
- B. Number who attend swim and safety sessions
- C. Survey Vietnamese parents at specific churches/temples in Seattle and Portland
 - recall key water safety messages
 - attitudes about life guards, supervision, life jackets

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