

Establishment of the International Drowning Research Alliance – IDRA

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Poster Session 3, Poster Foyer, November 6, 2015, 9:00 AM - 5:15 PM

Despite having major social and economic impacts drowning has been neglected for several decades. The bias produced by not accounting for the real drowning figures is the major fact to affect the importance given to the problem.

Recent studies have shown no link between the global burden of disease and the distribution of total health research or controlled trials. In other words, money for research isn't in any way related to the scale of health needs. Even richer countries that are publishing much more than poor countries but mostly only in response to their own local needs, did not produce enough evidence to enlighten most of obscure areas of drowning research. This raises especial concern about the amount of knowledge relevant to poor populations, deficient in their own research infrastructure and where most drowning occurs. Policies on drowning prevention and water safety in developing countries will be effective if based on local evidence and research, designed to suit the social, political and economic circumstances found in each setting.

The multidisciplinary nature of drowning research, covering topics of prevention, rescue and treatment, demands improved coordination across various agendas and sectors throughout the world. Hence, it's crucial to have a network for sharing knowledge and coordination of research efforts. To further increase its efficacy, an international research strategic plan should be developed.

In this regard, an international group of dedicated professionals, with expertise in drowning research and education, founded the non-for profit International Drowning Research Alliance (IDRA). IDRA founding members have a high technical and scientific impact with more than 3.000 citations, a combined i10-index of over 50 and a global research gate score of 141,51.

IDRA's objectives:

- An international scientific network devoted to all aspects of the use of quantitative and qualitative methods in drowning research to promote safety in and around water environments
- Act as an open admittance permanent body of internationally renowned experts dedicated to reducing the global burden of drowning through research.
- Provide a vital link between drowning researchers and those involved in the practical management of prevention, rescue and treatment of drowning.

A look into the works submitted to recent worldwide forums, seminars, workshops and conferences evidences the variety of research being undertaken and reveals the gaps in knowledge that make this area of public health a dynamic area for research. Furthermore, as evidenced by a scientometric study from our group, drowning research effort is still lagging behind the standards that are nowadays commonplace for other research areas with most efforts being placed on only a few mainstreams, such as emergency and medical responses, activities and occupations.

IDRA Action Plan:

- Coordinate and disseminate drowning research worldwide
- Gather a multidisciplinary group of experts, other than health and lifesaving professionals, around the topics of prevention, rescue and treatment, including experts on public health, educational and sport sciences, psychology, sociology, politics, economics and engineering.
- Act as the link to convert research into practical solutions, programs, resources or equipment
- Collect the latest data on the burden of drowning, on the latest developments in water rescue techniques and effectiveness of interventions for prevention of aquatic incidents, acting as a unique repository for drowning research and stimulating the policy debates
- Provide technical assistance to individuals and organizations with interest in using methodological approaches to answer specific drowning-related issues.

This presentation will provide an insight to the collaborative approach of establishing an international alliance dedicated to promote drowning research by gathering collaborative efforts fostering the reduction of incidents in and around water.

More information available on www.idra.research.org