ANYONE CAN DROWN NO ONE SHOULD
Drowning: a highly preventable public health challenge

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Overview

• Drowning as a public health challenge
• Global response
• Next steps towards preventing highly avoidable drowning deaths
The big picture

• Over 2.5 million deaths last decade
• Over half of deaths among those under 30 years of age
• Over 90% deaths in low- and middle-income countries
Drowning myths

Drowning is only an issue in Asia and the Pacific

DROWNING AS A LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG 1–14 YEAR OLDS, SELECTED COUNTRIES

Analysis of mortality data submitted to WHO shows drowning is one of the top five causes of death for people aged 1–14 years for 48 of the 85 countries where data meet inclusion criteria (see Figure 3).
Drowning myths

Drowning only happens in coastal/recreational settings

PLACE OF DROWNING OF BANGLADESHI CHILDREN AGED UNDER 5 YEARS

- Ditch: 26%
- Pond: 43%
- Container: 13%
- Lake: 7%
- River: 5%
- Other: 6%

Drowning myths

Drowning is an “accident” that can’t be prevented

National drowning deaths, Thailand, children aged <15 years

Source: Death Certificates, Health Policy and Strategy Division, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand.
Analyzed by: Division of Injury Prevention, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand.
Global burden

A leading killer of children

Global number of deaths for children aged 5 to 14 years (2019)

- Meningitis: 35,200
- Drowning: 35,100
- Malaria: 33,600
- HIV/AIDS: 29,300
- Measles: 23,500
- Malnutrition: 10,000
Global burden

Not only a child survival issue:

• DRIFT study – drowning death rate 1.5 X HIV
Global burden

Unsafe transport on water – economic lifeline
Global burden

Flood-related disasters
Global burden

Flood-related disasters – “100 year” floods
Prevention of drowning

- Barriers
- Basic swimming skills
- Village-based day care
Prevention of drowning

- Safe boating, shipping and ferry regulation
- Flood disaster risk management
- National water safety plans
# Prevention of drowning

## Interventions

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<th>Interventions</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Provide safe places (for example, a day-care centre) away from water for preschool children, with capable childcare</td>
<td>Train bystanders in safe rescue and resuscitation</td>
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<td>Install barriers controlling access to water</td>
<td>Build resilience and manage flood risks and other hazards locally and nationally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teach school-age children swimming and water safety skills</td>
<td>Set and enforce safe boating, shipping and ferry regulations</td>
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Prevention of drowning

Prevention of drowning

Practical Guidance:
Fine-grained guidance on implementation

Implementation workshops held in 2022 to increase uptake
UNGA Resolution on Drowning Prevention

UN passes HISTORIC RESOLUTION for drowning prevention

- 81 countries sponsor RESOLUTION
- Resolution calls for MULTISECTORAL response
- Asks WHO to coordinate DROWNING PREVENTION within UN system
- Declares July 25 WORLD DROWNING PREVENTION Day
How does this UNGA Resolution help?

• Political recognition a vital catalyst

• Vastly neglected but highly preventable

• Protection of child health investment

• Multisectoral issue – fits well with SDGs and Sendai Framework
Preventing drowning: part of the 2030 Agenda

- **3.2:** By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age
- **6.1:** By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- **10.7:** Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies
- **11.1:** By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
- **11.2:** By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
- **11.5:** By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situation
- **13.1:** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
- **13.3:** Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning
Sendai Framework

Floods one of the major climate-related issues expected to dominate future disasters
Time to act on a preventable killer

THANK YOU

HTTPS://WWW.WHO.INT/HEALTH-TOPICS/DROWNING
Video 1: https://rnli.org/video-player/DB6A9AE4-6EF5-49BB-B8EC423B88B223CC

Video 2: https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-drowning-prevention-day/2022/campaign-material#