

Nonfatal and fatal drownings in recreational water settings - United States, 2001--2002

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Summary

Context: In the U.S., drowning is the seventh leading cause of unintentional injury deaths for all ages and the second leading cause of all injury deaths in children aged 1-14 years. Many of these injuries occur in recreational water settings, including pools, spas/hot tubs, and natural water settings (e.g., lakes, rivers, or oceans).

Methods: To examine the incidence and characteristics of nonfatal and fatal unintentional drownings in recreational water settings, we analyzed 2001--2002 data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System All Injury Program and National Vital Statistics System death certificate data from 2001.

Results: During 2001--2002, an estimated 4,174 persons on average per year were treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments for nonfatal unintentional drowning injuries in recreational water settings. Approximately 53% of persons required hospitalization or transfer for more specialized care. During 2001, a total of 3,372 persons suffered fatal unintentional drownings in recreational settings. Nonfatal and fatal injury rates were highest for children aged <4 years and for males of all ages.

Discussion/Implications: Recommendations to reduce the number of drownings include increased use of environmental protections (e.g., isolation pool-fences and lifeguards) and training of all participants, caregivers, and supervisors in swimming/water-safety skills and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

References

Gilchrist, J. Gotsch, K. Ryan, G. 2004: "Nonfatal and Fatal Drownings in Recreational Water Settings - United States, 2001—2002". In: *MMWR* 53:447-452

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will have an understanding of the data collection methods for fatal and non-fatal drownings in the United States
2. Participants will have an understanding of the prevalence of fatal and non-fatal drownings in recreational water settings in the U.S.
3. Participants will have an understanding of the relative contribution to drowning of different recreational water settings in different age groups

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