



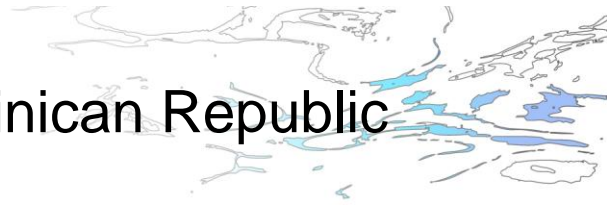
An Analysis of Drowning and Aquatic Injuries Suffered by Canadians in the Dominican Republic

Royal Lifesaving Society Canada

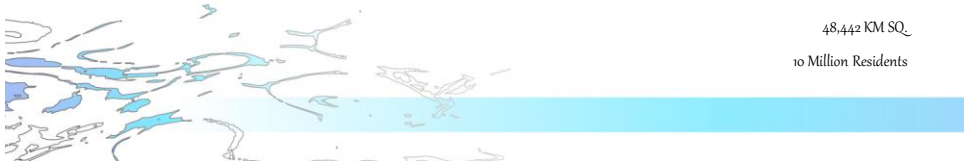
May 2011



Dominican Republic



48,442 KM SQ
10 Million Residents






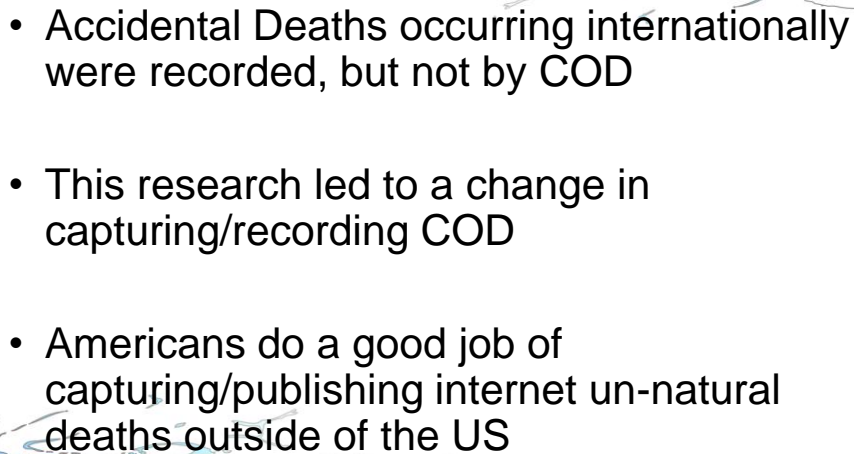
Authors

- Krista Elvidge
- Lifesaving Society
Nova Scotia Branch
President
- Gordon Richardson
- Lifesaving Society
Nova Scotia,
Executive Director

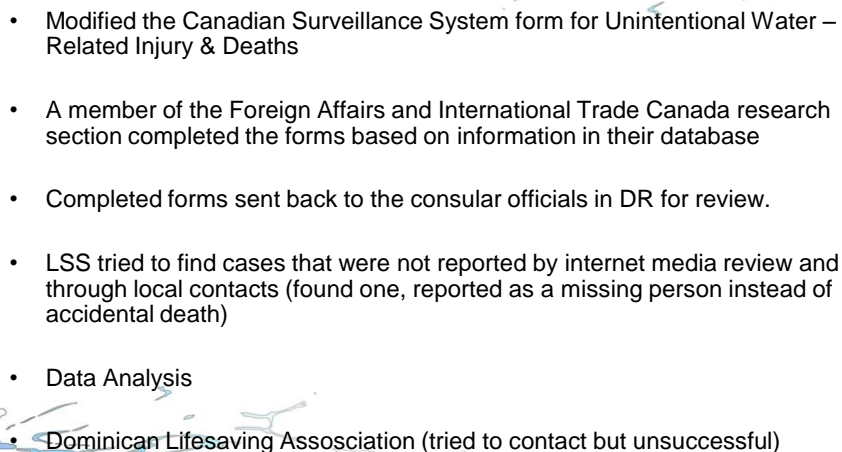


Why did we get involved?

- Mutual concern with Foreign Affairs and Industry Canada that large numbers of Canadian tourists were drowning in sun destinations
 - Existing information was largely anecdotal/not well documented
 - Ability to make change in DR
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- Accidental Deaths occurring internationally were recorded, but not by COD
 - This research led to a change in capturing/recording COD
 - Americans do a good job of capturing/publishing internet un-natural deaths outside of the US

The Review Process

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- Modified the Canadian Surveillance System form for Unintentional Water – Related Injury & Deaths
 - A member of the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada research section completed the forms based on information in their database
 - Completed forms sent back to the consular officials in DR for review.
 - LSS tried to find cases that were not reported by internet media review and through local contacts (found one, reported as a missing person instead of accidental death)
 - Data Analysis
 - Dominican Lifesaving Association (tried to contact but unsuccessful)

What did we look at?

- Demographics (Age , gender, Ethnic Origin, Date of Incident, day of week)
- Cause of Death (primary & secondary)
- Type of activity (recreational, daily living, contributing factors)
- Type of body of water
- Province of residence
- Provinces in the Dominican Republic (32)
- Other Information on where incident occurred
- Depth, distance, wave conditions, flow, temperature, light,
- Supervision
- Contributing factors (swimming ability, boating ability, alcohol, drug)
- Chronic Medical conditions
- Acute Medical Conditions
- Contributing Factors (PFD, fences,)
- Lifesaving & Rescue Activities
- Post Mortem Information

What did we modify

- We took out ice fishing & ice boats
- We added all 32 provinces in the DR
- We added a box for the resort
- We took out thickness of ice

We had a lot of opinions on what was going on



Between 2004 & 2007

2,229,000 Canadians Visited the DR

That number has increased from
526,000 in 2004 to 690,000 in 2007

Who is drowning?

- Only one female death
- One female injured
- Average age 46
- Most from Ontario, followed by Quebec
- One each from Manitoba, British Columbia and Saskatchewan

What Were they doing?

Unlike most Canadians who drown at home all of these victims (maybe one exception) intended to get wet.

Unlike Canadians who drown at home they were not boating.

Nine died in the Ocean, one in a pool, one in a waterfall

Injuries

- Only 3 serious injuries were reported – diving (head injury) into a shallow resort pool, one was on a boat (ruptured appendix), and an unknown
- Injuries are under reported, no means or requirement to collect this data
- Canadian Stats 2004 245 deaths, 865 emergency rm visits, 238 hospitalized



Rescue Attempts

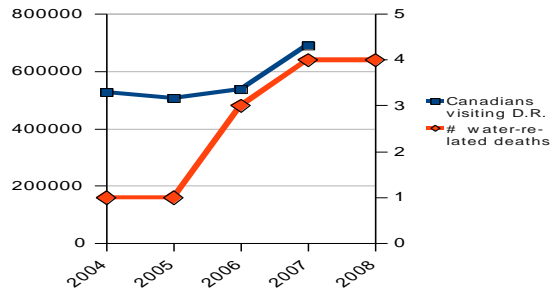
- In 4/13 acute rescue attempt was made:
- In 8/13 cases it was unknown, or there was no rescue attempt
- In 1 rescue was not needed (scuba diver)
- One rescue attempt was made by tourist police
- One was a tourist
- One rescuer drowned attempting to rescue someone else



Contributing Factors

- Canada – alcohol consumption, not wearing a PFD, cold exposure/hypothermia
- 36 % of drowning consumed alcohol prior to death
- DR- no blood alcohol reports were attained, alcohol was only identified as a factor in one case
- PFD – not a factor

Drowning by the Numbers



Quantifying the Risk

Difficult to quantify the risk of Canadians suffering aquatic injuries and deaths (sig low number)

Same period that there were 13 drownings, 5 died in traffic accidents

- Since 1973 12.7 million people have visited NSLS beaches (supervised) 0 fatalities

Conclusions



- Risk to Canadians is low

Significant contributing factor is the dangers presented by surf and beach front currents combined with swimming beyond their abilities

9/13 were on a resort

2/13 were on a tour purchased at the resort

2/13 unknown location

