
Disability and drowning – Personal experiences, research and practicalities

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One in every fifty individuals are born with a physical or intellectual disability which will potentially modify their and their families' lives. Some such disabilities potentially raise the risks of drowning.

The joy of water and of water experiences (swimming, surfing, boating, fishing) is important for all children and for most adults. How to ensure the opportunities for such aquatic fulfilment, without injury as a result of increased, realised risks is a challenge for all who are advocates for a safer aquatic environment.

Three keynote themes for inclusion of any otherwise disadvantaged groups are 'respect, relationships and opportunity'. Advocates for the promotion of 'water opportunity' need to engage practitioners in each of these three issues.

In this paper, we describe experiences with children with uncontrolled epilepsy; and adults with limb prostheses as examples of individuals with disabilities who nevertheless can participate in a range of aquatic experiences and sports with vigour, yet with safety.

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