

# Simulated emergency rescue competition for beginners – A retrospective case study of Monkstown Lifesaving Club during 1990–2010

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## Introduction

Competition is a useful educational aid to develop lifesaving skills and promote enthusiasm among competitors. The Simulated Emergency Rescue Competition (SERC) in this format offers an introductory format for competitors and officials that provide a structure that is usable, entertaining, simple and robust.

## Aims/Objectives

To provide an overview of the implementation of SERC in Monkstown Lifesaving Club over a 20-years period and list the benefits that have resulted.

## Methods

The Monkstown Lifesaving Club has used the SERC between 1990–2010 to train through competition 45–60 children annually. Participants formed a cross-section of the local community in Dun Laoghaire, a coastal urban community of Dublin in Ireland. SERC competition focused on entry-level capabilities of all elements and individuals involved: (1) Competition format: Teams of three individuals performed an un-revealed rescue scenario within a short time frame. Teams were required to rescue two casualties. The third individual's task was to summon aid, traditionally in the form of a simulated phone call to the emergency services. (2) Age: The children were aged between 5–10 years old. Size and age were not viewed as a constraint to participation and gender did not affect physical ability. (3) Sex: Lifesaving was viewed as an equality activity and teams were consisted of members of either single or mixed gender. (4) Depth of lifesaving knowledge: The syllabus of skills focused on the dry land rescues, shout, reach, throw and wade. The skill element increased by the inclusion of various rescue aids (e.g. extend reach). These skills were utilised as all children should be familiar with them even after a few week of involvement in the club. (5) First aid knowledge: The skill set centres on summoning emergency services by a simulate phone call where a judge simulated the phone operator. Treatment for shock was the other skill required of competitors that was tested in conjunction with lifesaving skill. (6) Swimming ability: The focus of the competition was on basic skills so the ability to swim was not necessary.

## Conclusion

Collectively, four main benefits have resulted from this competition. First, the club was benefited as parents appreciated the efforts of teachers and the club. They saw evidence of their children's ability so continued with the child's involvement in the club resulting in gaining more skills. Second, children show increased confidence and pride in their ability. This resulted in them telling, their friends and teachers when they attended school, about participation in the competition resulting in advertising and recruitment to the club improving. Third, in later life they had a 'safe' attitude when they got involved in other aquatic activities. Finally, the community benefited from the annual group of those 45–60 children who had the ability to perform first aid as evidenced by past pupils dealing with numerous minor and major first aid incidents. It was also benefited from the service ethos and volunteer culture that comes from lifesaving training.

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