
Study into the Swimming abilities of ACT primary school students

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Background/Introduction

In 2008 Royal Life Saving ACT conducted the ACT Primary Schools Swim and Survive program involving nearly 3000 students from across 24 ACT schools. This program provided Royal Life Saving with an opportunity to analyse the swimming abilities of ACT students and compare these results to the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework.

Methods

Data was collected during the 2008/09 ACT Primary Schools Swim and Survive Program. This information was used to identify, for current ACT public primary school students participants of the program, swimming and water safety skills and abilities. The information was entered into a Microsoft Access Database and analysed in SPSS version 15.0.

Results/Evaluation

The research identified that the current level of swimming and water safety skills of ACT public primary school students is well below the national benchmark set in the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2008–2011. The research also showed a clear gap in swimming abilities between ACT private school students and ACT public school students, with the latter achieving standards significantly lower.

Discussion

To help the ACT Government is being asked to increase its funding of swimming and water safety programs for ACT children to help improve the swimming abilities of ACT Children.

Conclusion

Key Findings

- Only 28% of students in years 3–6 achieved the minimum benchmark
- The average participation rate for public schools was 34% compared to private schools of 93%
- Private school students achieve the minimum national benchmarks three times more than public school students
- The poor outcomes are particularly evident in schools within the lower socio economic areas of Canberra

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