

Video Survey on People's Perceptions about the Most Impacting Messages that Raise Awareness and Change Attitude Against Drowning

David Szpilman¹ & Stathis Avramidis²

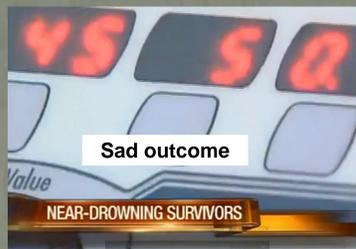
(1) Adult Intensive Care Unit - Hospital Municipal Miguel Couto; Retired Head of Drowning Resuscitation Center - GMAR CBMERJ; Founder, Ex-President and Medical Director of Brazilian Life Saving Society - SOBRASA and Medical Commission Member of International Life-saving Federation. (2) Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Greece); Leeds Metropolitan University (UK).

A major challenge to prevent drowning is to convince people that this tragedy may happen to anyone. We aimed to identify people's perceptions about the most impacting messages that may raise awareness and change attitude against drowning.

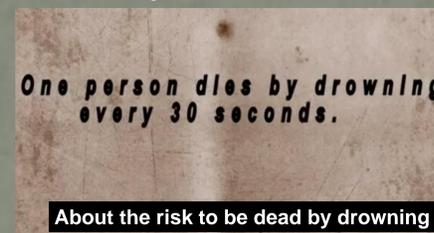
Method: An invitation to complete a survey questionnaire was sent via electronic mail and social network(internet) to over 20,000 people from different geographic and background. Participants start the survey by fulfilling their demographic profile following by watching 5 different videos(in English) that were available in public domain with a drowning theme, containing a vivid and real drowning testimony, a public statement announcement(PSA) and prevention animated cartoon.

5 videos selected

Vivid/real testimony



A public statement announcement (PSA)



All the participants were asking to answer the following questions:

1. What was your strongest reason to take your time for completing this survey?
2. What kind of film could possibly raise your awareness to the drowning problem?
3. What kind of film character could possibly raise your awareness to the drowning problem?
4. What kind of film message raised mostly your awareness to the drowning problem?
5. What kind of film message do you feel more confident to follow: Positive or Negative?
6. In which target group would the videos have the highest benefit of awareness?
7. Did your attitude towards drowning change after you watched the videos of this survey?
8. Having watched the videos, what would be the most important change in your attitude/behavior to prevent drowning?

All answers were pre-set in 2 to 5 multiple choices and can be seen at <http://surveylifeguard.blogspot.gr/>



Results: From 16 to 30 January, 151 participants had completed the survey questionnaire. 76% were in some way already involved in lifesaving, water safety or lifeguarding. Demographic was predominantly male(59%), middle age 31-45(51%) from Europe(36%), South America (31%) and North America (26%) respectively, with high level education(96%). The strongest reason for completing the survey were to be aware of the drowning burden and the wish to contribute in finding a solution(67%). In a score from 1(lowest)-to-5(highest), considering what kind of film could possibly raise their awareness to the drowning problem, a vivid/real drowning episode video score 4.4 followed by an animated cartoon 3.8 and a PSA 3.1. The film character which raises mostly their awareness was a testimonial of drowning survivors and/or their after effects with 4.7, followed by a lifeguard talking about the danger/risk of drowning with 3.8.

A real testimony by a drowning relative was the film messages that raised mostly people's awareness scoring 4.4, while portrayed images of drowning events scores 4.0. Among film message suggestions made by participants the most important was to make it more personal as possible so everyone feels that it could happen to them. Contrasting positive (swim near a lifeguard) with negative (never swim alone) preventive message, participants were more confident to follow positive 4.0. They felt more confident that messages would have more benefit of awareness if affecting indirectly children by adults(4.1) and affecting all groups at once(4.0), instead of affecting adults or children directly. 62% of participants expressed that after seen the videos, their attitude towards drowning changed. From those, "to look for drowning prevention tips" was the highest score(4.2), followed by to "look on how to treat drowning(i.e., first aid, rescue)" with 4.1. Considering the participant lifesaving previously involvement(Yes x No), difference were significant with female predominance(61%) and with low or no difference on age, continent and educational level on demographics. When considering all questions the only difference between those 2 groups was the predominant change in attitude towards drowning and the highest score to "look for prevention tips on drowning" for people Not previously involved in lifesaving.

Conclusions: Preventive messages are the key stone to reduce drowning but are available in many different formats and messages. An audiovisual seems to touch more deeply considering invoking more people's senses. This original research demonstrated among educated middle age people from developing countries that prevention campaign should first raise awareness of the problem using a vivid and real drowning episode video with a testimonial of survivors and/or their after effects. Then as a second step the prevention message should be positive instead of negative (prohibition) and affecting indirectly children by adults. Participants not previously involved in lifesaving reported a significant change in attitude towards drowning and the wish to look for prevention tips after seen the videos, which supports the value of using videos at preventive education campaign. A future larger scale study needs to engage participants of younger age and lower education as those groups may be the more vulnerable to drown.

