

Little lifesavers -- kids capable of CPR

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Nine-year-olds can and should learn CPR. A study of 147 schoolchildren, published in BioMed Central's open access journal *Critical Care*, has shown that, although the smallest may lack the requisite strength, the knowledge of how to perform basic life support is well retained by young children.

Fritz Sterz, from the Medical University of Vienna, Austria, led a team of researchers who studied children who had received six hours of life support training. Upon examination four months after the training, 86% performed CPR correctly. Sterz said, "The usefulness of CPR training in schools has been questioned since young students may not have the physical and [cognitive skills](#) needed to perform such complex tasks correctly. We found that, in fact, students as young as 9 years are able to successfully and effectively learn basic life support skills. As in adults, physical strength may limit depth of chest compressions and ventilation volumes, but skill retention is good."

The skills taught to the children included automatic defibrillator deployment, providing CPR, usage of the recovery position and calling for the emergency services. For the critical skills of CPR and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, BMI was the factor that had the biggest influence on depth of compressions and amount of air inhaled. Age did not play a role, indicating that a well-built nine-year-old can be just as capable as an older child.

The researchers conclude, "Given the excellent performance by the students evaluated in this study, the data support the concept that CPR

training can be taught and learnt by school children and that CPR education can be implemented effectively in primary schools at all levels. Even if physical strength may limit CPR effectiveness, cognitive skills are not dependent on age, and with periodic retraining, children's performance would likely improve over time."

More information: School [children](#) sufficiently apply life supporting first aid: A prospective investigation. Roman Fleischhackl, Alexander Nuernberger, Fritz Sterz, Christina Schoenberg, Tania Urso, Tanja Habart, Martina Mittlboeck and Nisha Chandra-Strobos, [Critical Care](#) (in press), ccforum.com/

Source: BioMed Central ([news](#) : [web](#))

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