

## 45-minute class helps middle schoolers master CPR basics

November 9 2015

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They retained the info months later, even without a refresher session, study found.

(HealthDay)—Just one 45-minute class can help middle school students master lifesaving CPR skills, researchers report.

The students in the study were taught both manual CPR (chest compressions) and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), a device available for emergency use in many public spaces.

"If schools across the United States invested one 45- to 60-minute period a year for each school year, this would ensure widespread CPR and AED knowledge with minimal cost and loss of school time," study authors Dr. Kae Watanabe and Dr. Joseph Philip, of the University of Florida, in Gainesville, wrote in a news release from the American Heart Association (AHA).

The findings were to be presented Sunday at the AHA's annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. Studies presented at medical meetings are typically considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

The study included 41 eight graders who received one 45-minute session on basic life support during a physical education class. Half the students received a repeat session two months later, while the others did not.

The students' CPR skills and knowledge of responding to a heart that has stopped beating were tested before and immediately after the first session, and then two and four months later.

There was considerable improvement in the students' CPR skills and knowledge after the first session, and they retained the information two and four months later, the researchers said.

Watanabe and Philip also found no difference in knowledge between students who received the repeat session and those who did not, although those who took the repeat session were somewhat better at using an AED.

Two experts in public health were heartened by the findings.

"According to the AHA's research, bystander CPR can as much as triple a victim's chance of survival," noted Rosemarie Ennis, director of community education and health at North Shore-LIJ Health System in Great Neck, N.Y.

"Four out of five times a cardiac arrest will occur within one's home environment, so there is a good chance a rescuer will help his own loved one," she said.

Ennis believes that "schools are an excellent place to offer CPR training,

giving opportunity to improve cardiac survival rates. When you teach [students](#) CPR, you are strengthening their community's safety and giving them skills they can carry into the future."

Beth Oliver is a nurse and senior vice president of clinical operations at Mount Sinai Heart in New York City. She agreed that "CPR saves lives," and "taking 45 to 60 minutes of a student's time is a very small investment—with a potentially huge benefit of saving lives."

**More information:** The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [CPR](#).

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Citation: 45-minute class helps middle schoolers master CPR basics (2015, November 9)  
retrieved 17 April 2024 from  
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-11-minute-class-middle-schoolers-master.html>

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