

Child resuscitation under scrutiny

November 30 2016, by Suzi Phillips

A new study to assess how surf lifeguards are doing with child resuscitation skills is underway in the north this summer.

A research team led by University of Auckland honorary lecturer, Jonathon Webber hope to have talked to 250 lifeguards in the northern region by the end of January.

"Leading into summer there is always increased coverage of drowning and water safety messages but this study will look at the competence and attitudes of surf lifeguards when it comes to cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on a [child](#)," says Mr Webber from the University's Department of Anaesthesiology.

"We have contacted all 17 surf lifesaving clubs in the northern region to invite participation in the study from lifeguards aged 16 years and over, who do not have a health background," he says.

"It is hoped that the findings of the study will help identify any gaps between perceived and actual abilities of surf lifeguards when it comes to performing CPR on a child," says Mr Webber.

The information will also be used to guide future training programmes for surf lifeguards and other community responders who may be first on scene at a drowning or other scenario where CPR on a child is required.

The data collection team will be out at beaches in the northern region from this weekend until the middle of February.

"The ability to perform basic life support when on patrol at our beaches is an important part of the skill-set of surf lifeguards," says Mr Webber. "Competency in the performance of adult CPR is a skill that receives a great deal of attention during annual refreshers and re-training, but we don't know much about CPR in a paediatric context.

"Researchers will use a Laerdal Little Junior child CPR manikin that is the only one of its kind worldwide fitted with electronic data capturing hardware and software," says Mr Webber.

"At present this technology exists for infant and adult manikins, but the company we are working with, iSimulate, have had to modify the software specifically for this project," he says.

On certain days lifeguard patrol members will be asked to take part by completing an anonymous, self-complete survey, followed by a brief test of simulated CPR on a resuscitation manikin.

The survey and the practical test will take around 20 minutes to complete and all data will be collected with no names or club names used.

Provided by University of Auckland

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