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Introduction

- Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional death in Irish children, a statistic mirrored worldwide.
- It occurs more commonly in adolescent males engaged in seasonal unsupervised activities or in children aged <5 years with access to swimming pools and unprotected water sources.
- Preschool aged children have the highest mortality.
- Drowning prevention gets relatively little attention and few resources.

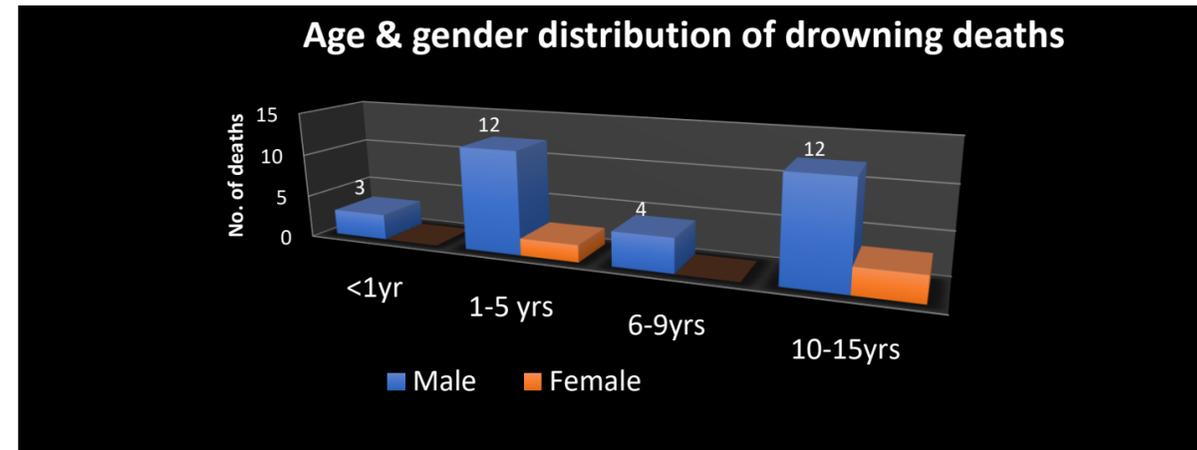
Objective

To examine the current trends in drowning related accidents in children aiming to identify potentially modifiable risk factors to tailor future preventative initiatives.

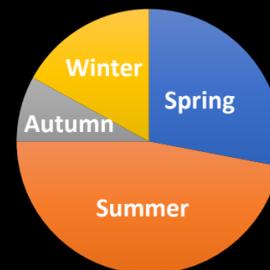
Methods

- A retrospective review of data (cause of death information and autopsy reports) obtained from the National Paediatric Mortality Register was performed.
- Details of the epidemiology of drowning deaths in Ireland (2006 – 2016) aged 0-15 years were examined to identify current trends and risk factors. Cases recorded as 'accidental drowning' or 'drowning' were included.

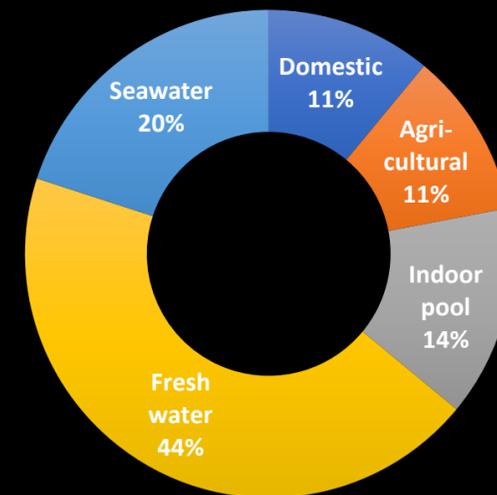
Tables and or figures



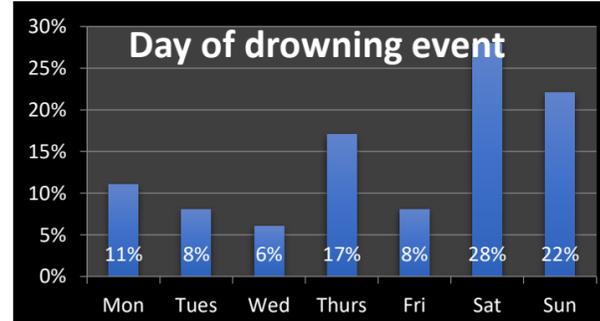
Seasonal distribution



Location of drowning event



Day of drowning event



Results

- A total of 36 drowning deaths were registered in children 0-15yrs in Ireland between 2006 and 2016.
- A male preponderance (86%) was evident.
- Distinct peaks were observed in the age categories: - **47% in the 0-5yrs**
- **42% in the 10-15yrs.**
- A seasonal peak in the summer months (47%; 31% in July) and a weekend trend (50%) were observed.
- Deaths were more likely to occur away from the victim's home (86%) mainly occurring in freshwater (44%).
- The vast majority of deaths (82%) in the <5 year age group occurred when the child was **unsupervised**.

Conclusion

Drowning accidents are an important cause of preventable death, a clear majority in males. Discrete age peaks should direct efforts towards these at-risk groups. Regular review of drowning accidents could identify potentially modifiable risk factors, informing future preventative initiatives. International best practice models could be adapted for Ireland.