



Media release

Parents and carers willing to perform CPR on kids but guidelines knowledge is poor, new study

Parents and carers are willing to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), especially on family members, although their knowledge of the current guidelines is poor, according to a new study.

The researchers, whose study is published in the latest issue of *Emergency Medicine Australasia*, the journal of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, are calling for greater public education to update those with previous training in CPR and to encourage others to undergo such training.

Emergency registrar Dr Jonathan Cu, registered nurse Ms Phuong Phan, and emergency specialist Dr Fenton O'Leary, all from the Children's Hospital at Westmead, surveyed 348 parents attending the emergency department of that hospital from February to March 2008.

53% of those surveyed had received CPR training prior to the previous year.

There was no significant difference in the willingness of those surveyed to perform CPR on an adult versus a child.

However, 81% were willing to perform CPR on a relative whilst only 64% were willing to perform it on a stranger.

8% had performed CPR in a real situation.

The researchers said previous studies had shown that effective bystander CPR is a good predictor of survival among children suffering a cardiac arrest.

Yet in those studies, despite the proven role of CPR in increasing survival from a cardiac arrest, only a small percentage of children suffering an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest received bystander CPR.

In the present study, if a child suddenly collapsed, 70% of those surveyed reported that they would approach the child first and assess responsiveness, while 30% would call for help immediately before approaching the child.

After establishing that the child was unresponsive, 7% would assess the patency of the airway and check for visible obstructions.

44% would position the head of a small baby in neutral position and 80% would put the head of a larger child in slightly extended position.

Most of the respondents (71%) also knew that one should initially deliver 2-5 rescue breaths in performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

However, only 11% of the respondents knew the correct number of chest compressions one should do in a minute and the ratio of compressions to ventilations.

Respondents in the 41-50 age group had the highest knowledge, while those in the 51-60 age group had the lowest.

The results also showed a significant reduction in knowledge as time passed since their last training.

Parents and carers are generally willing to perform CPR, especially on family members, the researchers concluded.

“However, their knowledge of the current guidelines, both perceived and measured, is poor and this reduces their confidence.

“More public education is required to update those with previous training and to encourage those who have none to be trained, so that we can increase the survival from out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in children.”