



**SURFING MEDICINE  
INTERNATIONAL**

25-7-2023, The Hague

## **Press Release Surfing Medicine International (SMI)**

### **World Drowning Prevention Day – 25 July 2023**

Today we want to raise awareness of drowning prevention. This global problem can only be solved by global action. Today you can help us by raising awareness in your community of this preventable cause of morbidity and mortality.

So how does this relate to the surf community? Surfers are at risk of drowning as a recent study shows drowning is the most common cause of death in surfers and bodyboarders in Australia<sup>1</sup>.

At the same time, surfers prevent drowning by acting as lifeguards, watching swimmers, and rescuing those in trouble, even on lifeguarded beaches<sup>2</sup>. The more experienced the surfer, the higher the chance that they reported to have rescued someone from drowning<sup>3,4</sup>. The World Health Organization (WHO) advises to train bystanders in safe rescue and resuscitation to prevent drowning<sup>5</sup>. As surfers are often the bystander rescuer at surf locations, every surfer should be prepared.

SMI therefore encourages surfers to do a proper risk assessment before entering the water and to obtain training in lifesaving, including board rescue. Especially because surfers can become a victim instead of rescuer when not trained to do so. In addition, we promote preventive communication by warning people on the beach and in the water before they get in trouble.

We also recommend all surfers to get trained in CPR. We hereby highlight the ILCOR consensus statement and ERC 2021 guidelines to give rescue breaths and chest compressions (if trained, able and willing to do so) for drowning patients in cardiac arrest<sup>6,7,8,9</sup>.

As surfers are a quite big and important group (global surf population is estimated to be 17-35 million participants) we are already part of the solution and can catalyze awareness in our communities globally.

Make a drowning prevention wave in your community by sharing this post! Let's raise awareness of drowning together, prevent drowning and promote safe rescue in your (surf) communities!

Because,

Anyone can drown, no one should.

#DrowningPrevention #Surfersaslifesavers #Surfersasbystanderrescuers  
@WHO @UN @ISA @WSL @IOC @ILS

## References

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4. Surfers as aquatics rescuers in Portugal and Spain: Characteristics of rescues and resuscitation knowledge. Joel De Oliveiraa,b, Miguel Lorenzo-Martínez, Roberto Barcala-Furelosa,\* , Ana Catarina Queirogac,d, Alejandra Alonso-Calvetea,e *Heliyon* 9 (2023) e16032. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10205585/>
5. WHO 2014. Global report on drowning: preventing a leading killer. <https://www.who.int/publications/item/global-report-on-drowning-preventing-a-leading-killer>
6. Wyckhof et al. ILCOR Summary Statement. *Circulation.* 2022;145:e645–e721. DOI: 10.1161/CIR.0000000000001017. <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/epub/10.1161/CIR.0000000000001017>
7. European Resuscitation Council Guidelines 2021: Basic Life Support: <https://www.cprguidelines.eu/assets/guidelines/European-Resuscitation-Council-Guidelines-2021-Ba.pdf>
8. European Resuscitation Council Guidelines 2021: Special circumstances: <https://www.cprguidelines.eu/assets/guidelines/European-Resuscitation-Council-Guidelines-2021-Ca.pdf>
9. European Resuscitation Council Guidelines 2021: Pediatric Life Support: <https://www.cprguidelines.eu/assets/guidelines/European-Resuscitation-Council-Guidelines-2021-Pa.pdf>

### **Other resources to support your (organizations) contribution in the media:**

- WHO Drowning Prevention Day: <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-drowning-prevention-day/2023#:~:text=The%20resolution%20accepts%20the%20invitation,on%2025%20July%20each%20year>
- Join SMI surfingmed.com to get educated on drowning and surf rescue: <https://www.surfingmed.com/smi-video-library/drowning-what-is-it-and-what-is-it-not/>
- Engaging the community to improve water safety (WHO) <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/engaging-the-community-to-improve-safety-around-water>
- Want to go blue for world drowning prevention day? Social media access WHO Campaign: <https://who.canto.global/v/POE47HEIFK/album/TERRS?viewIndex=0>



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