

Teaching Basic Life Support in More Than 1000 Young School Children in 5th Grade

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Abstract : Sudden cardiac arrest is sometimes eye-witnessed by kids. Mostly, their (grand-)parents are affected by sudden cardiac arrest, putting these kids under enormous psychological pressure: Although they are more than desperate to help, they feel insecure and helpless and are afraid of causing harm rather than realizing their chance to help. Even years later, they may blame themselves for not having helped their beloved ones. However, the absolute majority of school children - at least in Germany - is not educated to provide first aid. Teaching young kids (5th grade) in basic life support thus may help to save lives while washing away the kids' fear from causing harm during cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. A teaching of circulatory and respiratory (patho-)physiology, followed by hands-on training of basic life support for every single child, was offered to each school in our district. The teaching was performed by anesthesiologists, and the program was called 'kids can save lives'. However, before enrollment in this program, the entire class must have had lessons in biology with a special focus on heart and circulation as well as lung and gas exchange. More than 1.000 kids were taught and trained in basic life support, giving them the knowledge and skills to provide basic life support. This may help to reduce the rate of failure to provide first aid. Therefore, educating young kids in basic life support may not only help to save lives, but it also may help to prevent any feelings of guilt because of not having helped in cases of eye-witnessed sudden cardiac arrest.

Keywords : teaching, children, basic life support, cardiac arrest, CPR

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