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Parents who use portable pools without safety devices may underestimate their child’s associated risk of drowning.

14% of caregivers would only watch their child intermittently while in a portable pool.

49% of caregivers believe their child is more likely to drown in portable pool while swimming vs non-swimming times.

49% of caregivers believe they would hear their child if he/she was drowning in a portable pool.

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BACKGROUND:
• Portable pools pose a new and emerging risk for drowning due to their affordability, convenience, and easy assembly.
• Every five days in the summer, one child drowns in a portable pool.
• No current drowning prevention products and limited public health campaigns aimed at portable pools.

OBJECTIVE:
• To evaluate portable pool use and parental perceptions and knowledge of drowning risks associated with portable pools.

METHODS:
• Design: Prospective survey study of caregivers during summer 2021
• Inclusion Criteria: Caregivers of children ages 9 months to 6 years who presented for low acuity visit in urban pediatric emergency department, able to speak and read English

RESULTS:
• 85 caregivers completed survey from June-August 2021
• 52% of children were male and 22% of families reported <$20,000 annual income.
• 54% reported either owning or having access to a portable pool. 82% of portable pools were purchased in 2021.
• Only 11% of children overall had received formal swimming lessons.
• Only 28% of pool owners reported using any safety device with portable pool.
• Most common reasons for not using safety devices:
  • 52% were confident in close supervision while swimming.
  • 37% believed devices not needed for portable pools.

CONCLUSIONS:
• Young children commonly have access to portable pools.
• Targeted drowning prevention messaging, warning labels on portable pools and safety devices specific to portable pools are urgently needed.

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