

POSTER: UTILITY OF A SCALE TO ASSESS CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR SWIMMING COMPETENCE AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD AND PARENT PERCEPTION.

*Lisa M Barnett 1, 2, Carla De Pasquale¹, Liliana Morgado De Sousa², Boris Jidovtseff², Kristine De Martelaer³,
1 Deakin University, School of Health and Social Development, Geelong, VIC, Australia 2 Research Unit on Childhood, University of Liege, Belgium. 3 Research Unit Movement and Nutrition for Health and Performance, Vrije Universiteit Brussels.
*Corresponding and presenting author: lisa.barnett@deakin.edu.au

Objective: Drowning is a global public health issue. Aims were to assess: i) face validity of the 'Pictorial Scale of Perceived Water Competence (PSPWC), ii) the association between child and parent perception of child swimming competence and iii) factors associated with perception of child swimming competence. Methods: Child-parent dyads and swim instructors were recruited for a mixed method study. Children aged 4-8 years (n=51) reported on: familiarity, progressions and their own swim competence in 17 swimming situations. Parents (n=51) reported on child competence and swimming experience. Swim instructors (n=15) were interviewed. Spearman's rank correlation was used to assess whether child and parent swim perception were associated. The Mann-Whitney U test, Wilcoxon signed rank, or Kruskal-Wallis test were used to assess which factors were associated with child and/or parent report. Results: Children reported high familiarity of scenarios and could sequence items. Swim instructors concluded the PSPWC depicted swim skills accurately. There was no association between child and parent perception of children's swimming ability. Swimming level was positively associated with child perception but not parent proxy report. Swimming lesson experience, child sex, country of birth and disadvantage were not associated with child perception or parent proxy report. Older children perceived higher swimming competence but parent report was not associated with child age. Implications: Children have a better understanding of their swim competence than their parents do, suggesting parent education is needed. The PSPWC could be used by teachers (both swimming and classroom) to inform parents how their child estimates their swim competence. If use of this tool was incorporated into education practice this could assist in creating awareness, which can be the start of advocacy towards the creation of policy to assist in the provision of accessible swim education for all children.