

A PILOT OBSERVATIONAL SURVEY OF AUSTRALASIAN HOME PARENTERAL NUTRITION SWIMMING PRACTICES

Background:

In Australasia swimming is considered an essential life skill, but for individuals on Home Parenteral Nutrition (HPN) it is also important for Quality of Life (QoL). Unfortunately, considering the risks of central line infection, there is insufficient information and no professional consensus on the pros and cons of swimming. The aim of this pilot study was to better identify the differing practices and available advice.

Methods:

PNDU conducted an anonymous on-line survey of HPN members in March 2017 to ascertain swimming attitudes, practices and advice.

Results:

Of 26 respondents, 8 were carers of children and 18 were adults. 50% liked to swim, of whom, approximately 40% swim regularly, and 40% only swim on holiday. Of the regular swimmers, 11/13 swim in the sea or private pools, and 6/13 in public pools. No-one reported central line infections attributable to swimming. 26% didn't swim.

All carers of children had consulted their hospital team for swimming advice, compared to 67% of adults. 25% of teams 'permitted swimming' (5/20); whereas over half advised 'absolutely not' (11/20). Nevertheless, 80% of those advised not to swim would consider swimming if more comprehensive information about safety considerations or protections were available.

Conclusions:

Recognition of QoL factors for HPN consumers is increasing. Many PNDU members are enthusiastic about swimming; generally recognise the risks; and are prepared to take special precautions to minimise them. Advice from hospital teams regarding swimming appears inconsistent, with over 50% recommending against, but the majority of those who had been advised not to swim would consider swimming if more safety information was available. There is therefore a need for Australasian HPN consumers and carers to receive more standardised evidence-based advice from health professionals for participation in an activity which can improve QoL.