In Safe Hands: CPR Education for Adolescents

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Project Purpose
- The purpose of this project is to formulate an age-appropriate class to provide students with the knowledge to recognize when CPR is needed, and for the students to gain confidence to react resourcefully if these emergencies were to occur.

Background
- Research has found there are minimal to no CPR training programs readily available to school-aged children in the Gadsden City School area.
- The age of students staying home without adult supervision has increased over the years due to the costs of childcare rising. This change creates “latch-key kids”
- A bad situation could be made worse without the knowledge of when and how to react during a cardiac arrest due to the tissues of the brain beginning to deteriorate within minutes of no oxygen.
- In Safe Hands is a program designed to increase the student’s confidence to react during an emergency

Theoretical Framework
- This project was guided by the Neuman Systems Model.
- The Neuman Systems Model is an approach to protect the human from excessive stress by assessing and structuring each person’s ability to recognize and react to stress by acknowledging lines of defense.
- When faced with the challenge of witnessing a cardiac arrest, simply knowing how to perform CPR is not enough. Confidence to react is also pertinent.

Methods and Project Design
- The sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students attending Gadsden Middle School’s summer program were asked if they would like to attend the class. Then, informed consents were signed and returned by the students’ parents.
- Pretests were administered to the students to complete before any CPR education was given.
- These tests simply asked whether the students felt comfortable to perform CPR and if they knew the correct steps.
- A discussion was then held to convey the correct sequence of performing CPR.
- The students then split up to do two sets of compressions/breaths on medical grade mannequins with built-in depth monitors.
- The effectiveness of the class was evaluated by administering the same quiz as a post-test to see if the student’s answers changed.

Population and Sampling
- The class took place at Gadsden Middle School in Gadsden, Alabama.
- 34 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders attended the program.
- Each class was instructed by two American Heart Association certified CPR instructors during a 60 minute time frame.

Results
- After reviewing the collected pretests and post-tests, it was determined that a need for CPR education to students would be beneficial.
- Evaluation of test results revealed an increase in students’ knowledge, comfort level, and confidence regarding CPR.
- All 34 participating students agreed that yearly CPR classes would benefit them.

Practice Implications
- After reviewing the final questionnaires from the 34 students who participated in the class, an apparent need for formal CPR education in schools was evident.
- It is recommended that school boards explore opportunities to incorporate either the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or individually certified CPR instructors to lead a class to ensure each student has the opportunity to learn the correct technique, the reason why CPR is performed, and how early initiation of CPR saves.
- Students can benefit from hands-on CPR instruction guided by a qualified instructor, utilizing quality mannequins.

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References
References available upon request.