**INTRODUCTION**

From 2000-2009, 504 commercial fishing deaths occurred in the United States, 31% of which resulted from a person falling overboard and drowning. (Lucas, Lincoln, Somervell, and Teske, 2012). Of the 504 commercial fishing deaths that occurred across the United States between 2000 and 2009, 116, or 23%, occurred in the Gulf of Mexico fishery (NIOSH, 2015). Similar to other countries, there is no requirement for U.S. commercial fishing crews to wear personal flotation devices (PFDs) while fishing (MAIB, 2016). Yet the leading cause of death among fishermen is drowning due to the loss of a vessel or a fall overboard. The majority of people who have died due to falls overboard were alone while on deck, and none of them had on a personal flotation device (PFD) (NIOSH, 2015). Vietnamese fishermen make up one-third of the licensed fishermen population working on the Gulf Coast. This study is part of a 3-phase NIOSH-funded study, with the long-term goal to develop and evaluate a social marketing campaign to increase PFD use. The purpose of this study is to determine which type of commercially available PFD results in the highest satisfaction and preferences among Vietnamese commercial fishing crews in the Gulf of Mexico. Attitudes/beliefs among Vietnamese shrimp fishermen of the Gulf of Mexico may influence behaviors that are risk factors for both fatal and nonfatal injuries.

**METHODS AND MATERIALS**

Project partners, USCG Safety Inspection Examiners, recruited subjects in three Louisiana fishing communities: 9 captains and 24 deckhands participated in this pre-post test repeated measures study. The captains and members of crews provided baseline data and were then asked to wear three different types of PFDs for a minimum of 3 hours while shrimp fishing in the Gulf. Once the crew returned to dockside, a follow-up survey was distributed. For each of the three types of PFDs: ski belt, inflatable belt, inflatable suspender, members were asked to evaluate 11 PFD attributes: weight, tightness, constricting motion, chaffing skin, bulkiness, snagging gear, comfort, how the PFD fit their body, interfering with work, donning and cleaning. Fishermen averaged 22 years of commercial fishing experience, and worked roughly eight months out of the year. At baseline, only 12% indicated wearing a PFDs frequently and none stated always. Yet 48% reported PFDs are effective if fall overboard. The PFD considered least constrictive of movement was the inflatable suspender (43.5%) compared to the inflatable belt (47.5%) and ski belt (28.3%). The inflatable suspender was rated to interfere the least with work compared to the other 2 types of PFDs. 54.2% ranked the suspender type as very comfortable to wear. When assessing the extent they would wear each type, 66.7% reported they would wear the inflatable suspender; 50% of the participants would wear the ski belt and 20.8% would wear the inflatable belt most all of the time. Respondents indicated they were willing to pay the most for the suspender type. Fishermen were most likely to wear PFDs if the captain told them to, working alone, working during bad weather, and working on or near the edge of the boat. Less than half of the respondents were influenced to wear any of the PFDs because other crew members wore PFDs.