World Conference on Drowning Prevention 2019
Durban – South Africa
October 8th-10th

5 YEARS COLLECTING INFORMATION ON DROWNING IN SPAIN

Pino Espinosa, J.; Vega Cid, A.A.; Domínguez Pachón, AM.; García Sanz, I.; Sanz-Arribas, I.

Royal Spanish Lifesaving Federation (RFESS)

Background

According to the World Health Organization, WHO, every year at least 372.000 people death by drowning in the world (WHO, 2014), and **it is the third cause of mortality and represents 7% of the world total**.

In response to the **absence of official records in Spain** that collect information on the magnitude of the problem or the national peculiarities of deaths caused by drowning, **Royal Spanish Lifesaving Federation (RFESS), since 2015, carries out a National Report of Drowning** that counting the number of drowned and making a classifications for its subsequent analysis and elaboration of measures to be adopted in the different spaces. In this way, data collection is elaborated as an important method to gain knowledge about the preventive measures must be taken in order to reduce the number of fatal water accidents in our country.

Objectives

- To **know and report about the number of deaths** caused by drowning in Spain.
- To **classify risk factors and areas**, unfavorable age ranges, exposure levels and type of accidents that take place in water spaces of our country.
- To **establish a classification of guidelines** to be adopted as timely **prevention measures** to prevent deaths through drowning.
- To **make a comparison over the years** to check the effectiveness of the preventive measures taken and to develop new considerations.

Methodology

The Information is **collected from written and digital press through internet search engines**, and using the followings keywords: drowning, drown death, missing and corpse.

Collecting **data are ranked according to a parameters needed to make the statistic and to prepare the timely analysis.** These parameters are as follows: age, date of the accident, time, sex, nationality, place of the accident (beach, river, ocean, lake, pool…), regions, existence of lifeguard service, developed activity, and type of space (public or private). All these collected **data are shown in tables and statistical graphs in numbers and percentages of each variable**.

Results

Results of the National Report of Drowning, show that **over 400 people death by drowning** every year, in 2018 decrease with 373 victims and in 2019, until August 31, are 307.

The highest number of deaths by drowning is in Spanish **males over 45 years of age on unsupervised beaches.** In addition, specific data from other interior areas of Spain with different characteristics are offered too.

2.013 **Total number of drowning deaths in Spain 2015 –2019** (Until August, 31)

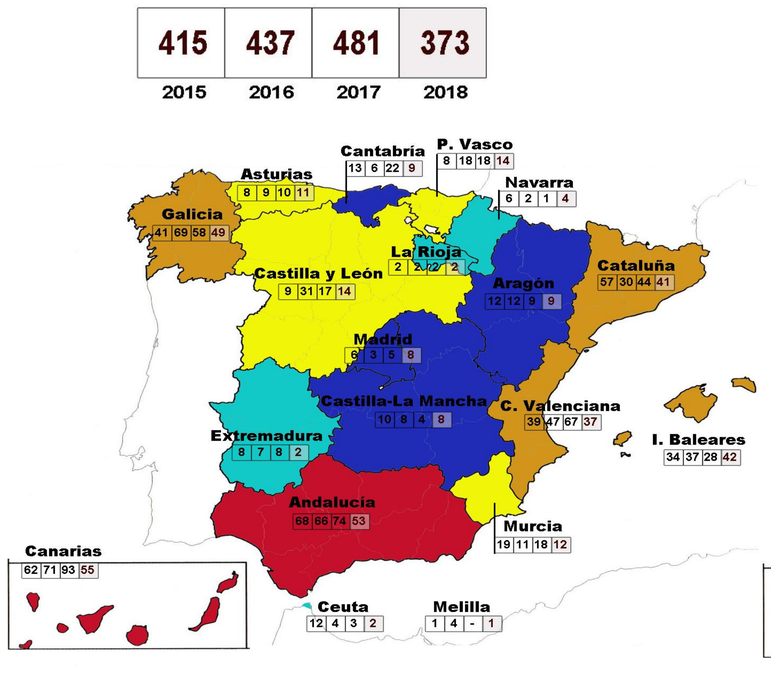

Figure 1. Number of drowning in Spain between January 1 and December 31, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018, depending on the region where the incident took place.

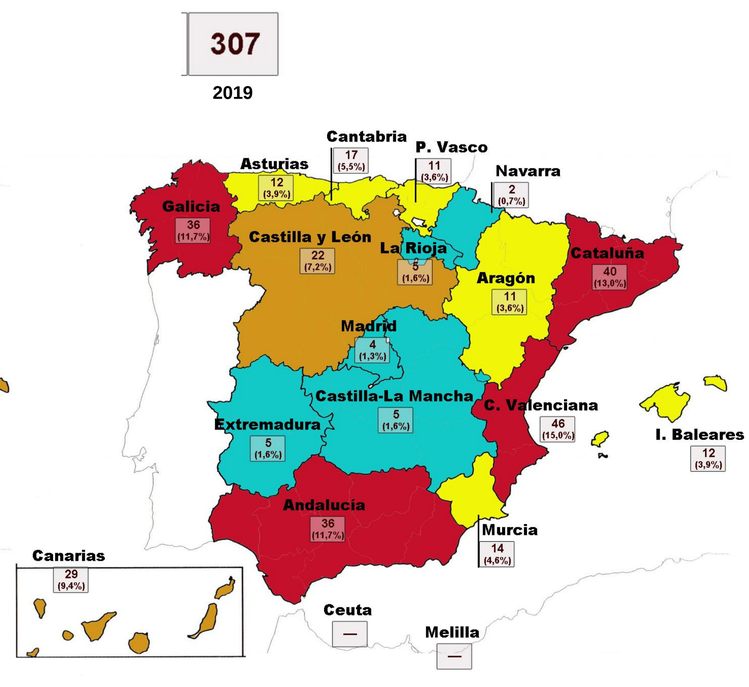

Figure 2. Number and percentage of drowning in Spain between January 1 and August 31, 2019, depending on the region where the incident took place.

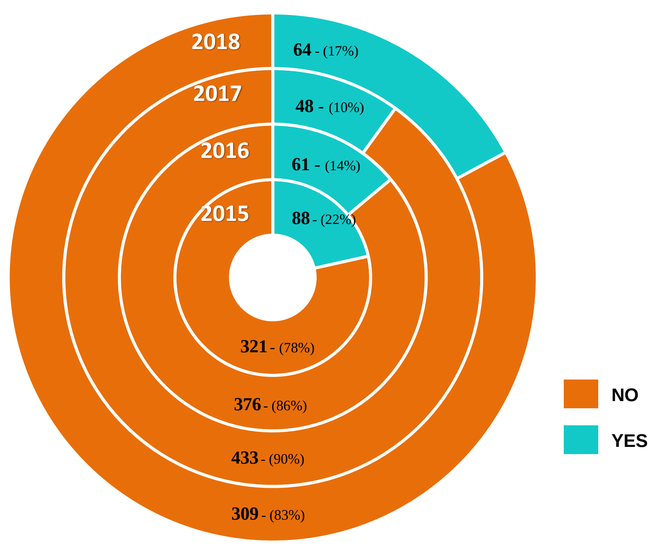

Figure 3. Number and percentage of drowning people in Spain between January 1 and December 31, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018, depending on whether or not there were lifeguards at the time of the incident.

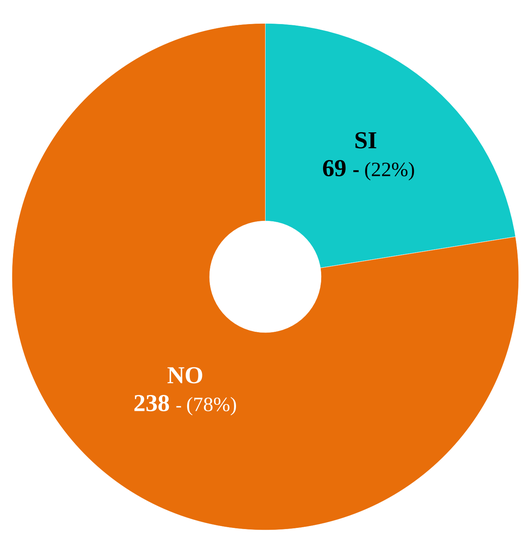

Figure 4. Number and percentage of drowning people in Spain between January 1 and August 31, 2019, depending on whether or not there were lifeguards at the time of the incident.

Drowning victim profile
Number and percentage total
2015 – 2019 (Until August, 31)

NATIONALITY	SEX	PLACE	SEASON	AGE	ACTIVITY
Spanish	Male	Beach	Summer	Over 65 years old	Bathers
1.448 (71,93%)	1.582 (78,59%)	1.014 (50,37%)	1.150 (57,13%)	705 (35,02%)	1.133 (56,28%)

Conclusions

An accurate count of the number of people drowning each year is important, especially when it comes to involving the government and individuals to prevent future deaths by drowning and establishing strategic plans, because you cannot value what is not measured. Therefore, data statistics help to know what the best preventive measure is in each moment, by counting accurate data that will help to analyze certain situations, develop specific programs or campaigns and monitor their success.

Solution proposed: the creation of a National Department of Water Safety that is responsible for prevention campaigns, statistics, lifeguard training regulations or legislation on rescue and water safety, as well as creating a lifesaving culture.

Real Federación Española de Salvamento y Socorrismo
prevencion@rfess.es – www.rfess.es
@RFESS1