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Letter to the Editor

Renewed KIDS SAVE LIVES campaign to further increase awareness and fight sudden cardiac death in the era of COVID-19



To the Editor,

The European Resuscitation Council has recently published a position statement on schoolteachers' education and qualification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)¹ and COVID-19 resuscitation guidelines, including adapted recommendations for education, courses, and basic and advanced life support.² Educating schoolteachers in CPR and qualifying them to teach it to children as recommended by the worldwide 'KIDS SAVE LIVES' (KSL) initiative may help considerably and sustainably to improve survival worldwide after sudden out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA). The COVID-19 pandemic emerged in China at the end of 2019 and challenged most healthcare systems and societies worldwide.³ Many countries reacted with various lockdown measures to limit the spread of infection and to reduce death rates.⁴ Fortunately, children have not been severely affected compared with older people, but concern was expressed about their potential role in spreading infection, which resulted in a limitation of school activities. Thus, we have to consider that the impact of social distancing on teaching and the fear of interacting with a victim potentially infected with COVID-19 could severely reduce the willingness of children and teachers to teach and to provide CPR. While local school organisation can vary widely in term of spaces, timetables, web-based lessons and face-to-face activities, we acknowledge the urgent need for a refurbished KSL campaign, specifically addressing obstacles to bystander CPR provision during a pandemic.⁵ Awareness of the importance of providing effective CPR in OHCA during the pandemic requires special activities and support to overcome these barriers. Focus should be brought on the role of the community in helping save lives, the risk-benefit balance for young rescuers with the chance of saving a life, the importance of personal protection against infection and of local measures for disease surveillance, e.g. through dedicated apps, contact tracing, testing, etc. As a specific campaign, the authors propose a renovated KSL logo for use during the COVID-19 pandemic and, in agreement with the European Resuscitation Council, calls the international community for specific initiatives to reinforce and adapt the KSL campaign to the current context. Far too many people are still dying following OHCA worldwide, and hundreds of thousands of deaths could be avoided. All the communities must overcome the fear of COVID-19 to help KIDS to learn to save lives (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 – The “KIDS SAVE LIVES” COVID-19 logo has been developed by the Italian Resuscitation Council (IRC). We very much appreciate and acknowledge that the IRC is providing this logo for free to all participating in the “KIDS SAVE LIVES” campaign in Europe and all over the world (<https://www.erc.edu/projects/kids-save-lives>).

Conflict of interest statement

FS is Science and Education Committee BLS co-Chair of the European Resuscitation Council. GR is member of Science and Education Committee BLS of the European Resuscitation Council. RG is European Resuscitation Council Board Director Training and Education. AL is member of ERC Education committee. KGM is Chair-Elect of the European Resuscitation Council. JPN is Editor-in-Chief of Resuscitation and Chair of the European Resuscitation Council. TO is Science and Education Committee BLS co-Chair of the European Resuscitation Council. GDP is Editor of Resuscitation. AS is member of Science and Education Committee BLS. BWB is European Resuscitation Council (ERC) Board Director Science and Research; Chairman of the German Resuscitation Council (GRC); Member of the Advanced Life Support (ALS) Task Force of the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR); Member of the Executive Committee of the German Interdisciplinary Association for Intensive Care and Emergency Medicine (DIVI); Associated Editor of the European Journal of Anaesthesiology (EJA), Co-Editor of “Resuscitation”; Editor of the Journal “Notfall + Rettungsmedizin”, Co-Editor of the Brazilian Journal of Anesthesiology. He received fees for lectures from the following companies: Forum für medizinische Fortbildung (FomF), Baxalta Deutschland GmbH, ZOLL Medical Deutschland GmbH, C.R. Bard GmbH, GS Elektromedizinische Geräte G. Stemple GmbH, Novartis Pharma GmbH, Philips GmbH Market DACH.

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