CPR and Music: Teaching Children to Save Lives

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Introduction

Our aim was to develop a sustainable teaching programme for primary school pupils¹ aged 7-11 (Key Stage 2) to learn CPR and defibrillation, and retain the knowledge by using music as an aid. Currently it is not part of the UK National Curriculum and increased survival in OOHCA are seen in countries teaching children CPR¹. The aim is to teach children at a young age to embed skills². Few children in the UK learn CPR routinely and we wanted to change this.

Music was chosen as an aid to teach children with evidence showing retention and learning is enhanced by this means³

It's CPR Iain Gilmour

Performance track: 3
Backing track: 4

Verse

Someone's in trouble,
What should you do?
Check if they're breathing,
Or talking too.
Time to get help now,
Call 999.
Then roll your sleeves up,
Because it's time.
Just remember the things you were taught when the medics trained you,
There's no turning back, it's up to you!

Chorus

Lock your hands, place on the chest,
Keep your arms straight, do not rest.

Example of one of the songs specifically written to teach CPR to children

Method

Songs were specifically composed with the 100-120bpm used during CPR with words reflecting what to do in the event of cardiac arrest. Songs were taught a week before healthcare professionals went to teach the pupils CPR. The music was taught at each school and coordinated by the national music hub. Teaching utilised different methods to aid retention:

- A whole school assembly with music
- A demonstration by the medical team
- Small group teaching with hands on learning for students
- Assessment of skills with a competitive element.

Following the teaching of pupils, all staff were taught at an afterschool meeting and a parents evening offered to each school. Feedback was obtained from pupils and teachers of each year group.

Each school will be revisited every two years to refresh skills and teach new pupils as part of the ongoing programme.

Results

1,250 children and 130 teachers were taught over 5 days showing competence in CPR and defibrillator location and use. The music, manikins and booklets have been given to the schools to continue their learning. Each child was printed with a certificate and sticker for their achievement.

Positive feedback from teachers and pupils was received.

Conclusion

Teaching CPR and defibrillation with music enhances primary school pupil engagement and learning. A learning pack left with the school consolidates the teaching. We are now a registered charity and are expanding to parts of the UK over the next year.

A further 10 schools have been taught since abstract submission, with a further 34 schools to be taught prior to 2018.

References

- 1.S Calicchia et al, "Teaching Life-Saving Manoeuvres in Primary School," BioMed Research International, vol. 2016, Article ID 2647235
- 2.L P Roppolo et al, "Retention, retention, retention: targeting the young in CPR skills training!" Critical Care 2009 Vol 13 No 5 P185
- 3.C B Brewer, "Music and Learning: Integrating Music in the Classroom," John Hopkins University School of Education 1995