

Supervise your kids and beware of water!

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Did you know death caused by drowning among children is the highest in the world? Did you know drowning incidents often occur during school holidays? And did you know which hotspot area of drowning in Malaysia? Based on these questions, we should know the facts of the drowning incident and the preventive measures that need to be taken by every parent so that this drowning incident will not happen to our children. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) identified that drowning is among the ten leading causes of death among children and young people (1- 24 years old) in every world region. These incidents are estimated to claim the lives of 236,000 people each year. The Perak Clinical Research Centre study showed that about 500 people, mostly youth, drowned in Malaysia annually, making drowning the second cause of death among those between 1 and 18 years old (Singh et al., 2014). Moreover, a total of 31 children were found drowned in swimming pools and theme parks, with the highest number recorded in Selangor, Kedah, and Pahang, and about 75 percent of the children were under five years old (Audrey, 2017).



According to statistics released by Jabatan Bomba dan Penyelamat Malaysia (JPBM) (2018), the percentage of deaths due to drowning is four times higher than fire incidents, with an average of 700 cases per year (Syalikha, 2018). Mostly occurring in the same location but involving different victims, and statistics show 45 percent of victims are children under the age of 18 (Md Amin, 2018; Farizan et al., 2019). In Malaysia, drowning incidents often occur while swimming at the beach or swimming pool, especially during school holidays. Currently, there are no formal regulations or acts applicable to drowning prevention that have been identified, such as requiring lifeguards to be present in all public pools, pool fencing, and wearing floatation devices for children when engaging in water activities (Farizan et al., 2019). As a result, similar incidents and accidents continue to happen repeatedly.

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Kanak-kanak dikhuatiri lemas

Mangsa yang dikatakan hiperaktif terjun ke dalam sungai ketika berjalan bersama ibunya

■ AZURA MOHAMAD

TANAH MERAH - Seorang kanak-kanak lelaki dikhuatiri lemas selepas terjun ke Sungai Jerantau di sini, petang kelmarin.

Ketika kejadian, mangsa, Muhammad Al Hakim Zafar, enam tahun, dikatakan ke sungai berkenaan bersama ibunya, Saripah Awang Hamid, 50, setelah begitu beria-ia leman.

Ibunya berkata, sepanjang jalan ke sungai dia memintai tangan anak bongsu daripada lapan beradik itu memandangkan dia kanak-kanak hiperaktif.

Bagaimanapun katanya, ketika hampir dengan sungai berkenaan pejalan tangan Muhammad Al Hakim terlepas melepaskan mangsa terus berlari ke sungai.



SARIPAH

Hakim terus terjun. Saya terian ke sungai juga sebab nak tolong dia tapi saya nyaris lemas, nasib baik saya diselamatkan oleh penduduk yang dengar saya minta tolong, katanya ketika ditemui di tempat kejadian, semalam.

Saripah berkata, anaknya yang hanyut kemudian terus hilang daripada pandangan. Dia yang juga ibu tunggal berkata, penduduk tidak dapat menyelamatkan anak



Penduduk berada di tebing Sungai Jerantau untuk mengetahui perkembangan terkini operasi mencari, semalam. Gambar kecil: Muhammad Al Hakim.

bongsunya memandangkan air sungai agak dalam.

Sementara itu, Penolong Penguasa Bomba, Hanafi Mohd berkata, lapan anggota bomba dari unit skuad tebing

dalam operasi mencari semalam. Menurutnya, empat anggota dari Balai Bomba Pengkalan Kubor dan empat

lagi dari Balai Bomba Kota Bharu. Sedangkan mangsa masih belum ditemui.

TRAGEDI MENANGGUK IJAH
Dua mangsa lemas ditemui

... (text continues) ...

LAKARAN TEMPAT KEJADIAN

... (map details) ...

Guru turun padang operasi SAR

... (text continues) ...

The statistics from JPBM also identified 19 hotspot locations based on drowning incidents between 2016 and 2018 (Nur Saliawati, 2019). There were 182 drowning incidents in rivers, 58 cases at the beaches, 39 cases at lakes, and 27 cases at the waterfall. The total of recreational district death incidents was 941 cases from 2016 until 2018. Among the locations identified as being at high risk of drowning are Port Dickson Beach in Negeri Sembilan, Puteri Beach in Melaka, Sekayu Waterfall in Terengganu, and Sungai Pertak in Selangor (Nur Saliawati, 2019).

The factors that can cause drowning include unrestricted access to the beach, lack of knowledge and understanding of water conditions, ignorance, neglect or misdiagnosis of water hazards, lack of continuous visual supervision, and lack of awareness and education on water safety and the ability to save lives.



Based on the facts above, drowning among children in Malaysia has frustrated the government and society since teenagers and youths are the community's future leaders. Therefore, this alarming problem warrants immediate attention, and intervention of drowning prevention is needed. There are several studies that show drowning deaths can be avoided if adequate safety precautions are taken, for example, parental supervision; swimming lessons; and learning cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can significantly improve the knowledge and confidence among parents (Farizan et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the authorities such as Majlis Keselamatan Aktiviti Air Negara (MKAAN), Jabatan Bomba dan Penyelamat Malaysia (JPBM), Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia (KPM) and Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan (KPKT) also need to play an important role in preventing drowning incidents among the Malaysian community by regularly holding prevention campaigns to increase public awareness of water safety. In this regard, let us together play a role in reducing the incidence of deaths due to drowning in Malaysia. The close cooperation of all communities and government bodies will develop safe, systematic, and fun water activities. Therefore, we will achieve zero incidents of drownings in Malaysia.

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