



Injury Prevention: Toddler Pool Drowning Deaths in Florida

Patti Ragan, PhD, MPH, PA-C
Florida Epidemic Intelligence Service
Joann Schulte, DO, MPH
CDC Assignee, Florida Department of Health
Lisa Vanderwerf-Hourigan, MS
Office of Injury Prevention, FDOH
Michael Lo, MSPH
Office of Injury Prevention, FDOH

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to
 - Define the scope of the drowning deaths in children aged 1-4 years in Florida
 - Identify contributing factors associated with toddler pool drowning deaths in Florida
 - Discuss prevention strategies to reduce toddler drowning deaths



Overall Florida Drowning Deaths 1992-1998*

- On average, 404 drowning deaths per year from 1992-1998
 - Declined to 365 per year in 2001-2005**
- Overall rate of drowning between 1992-1998 was 2.9/100,000
 - Declined to 2.1/100,000 per year in 2003-2005**
- Males (78%) more likely to die than females
- Seasonal – more deaths in May-June-July
- More likely to be residents (81%)
- Location: 28% deaths in swimming pools
- Two groups at greatest risk of drowning
 - Children 1-4 years
 - Persons > 65 years

Florida Drowning Deaths In Children ages 1-4 years**

- Florida has the highest drowning death rate in US for children ages 1-4 years
- In 2003, Florida surpassed California, the most populous state, in children ages 1-4 years who drowned
- In 2003, 18% of children who drowned in the US were from Florida, the most of any state
- In 2005, 68 children ages 1-4 years drowned in Florida, 43 in swimming pools (63%)

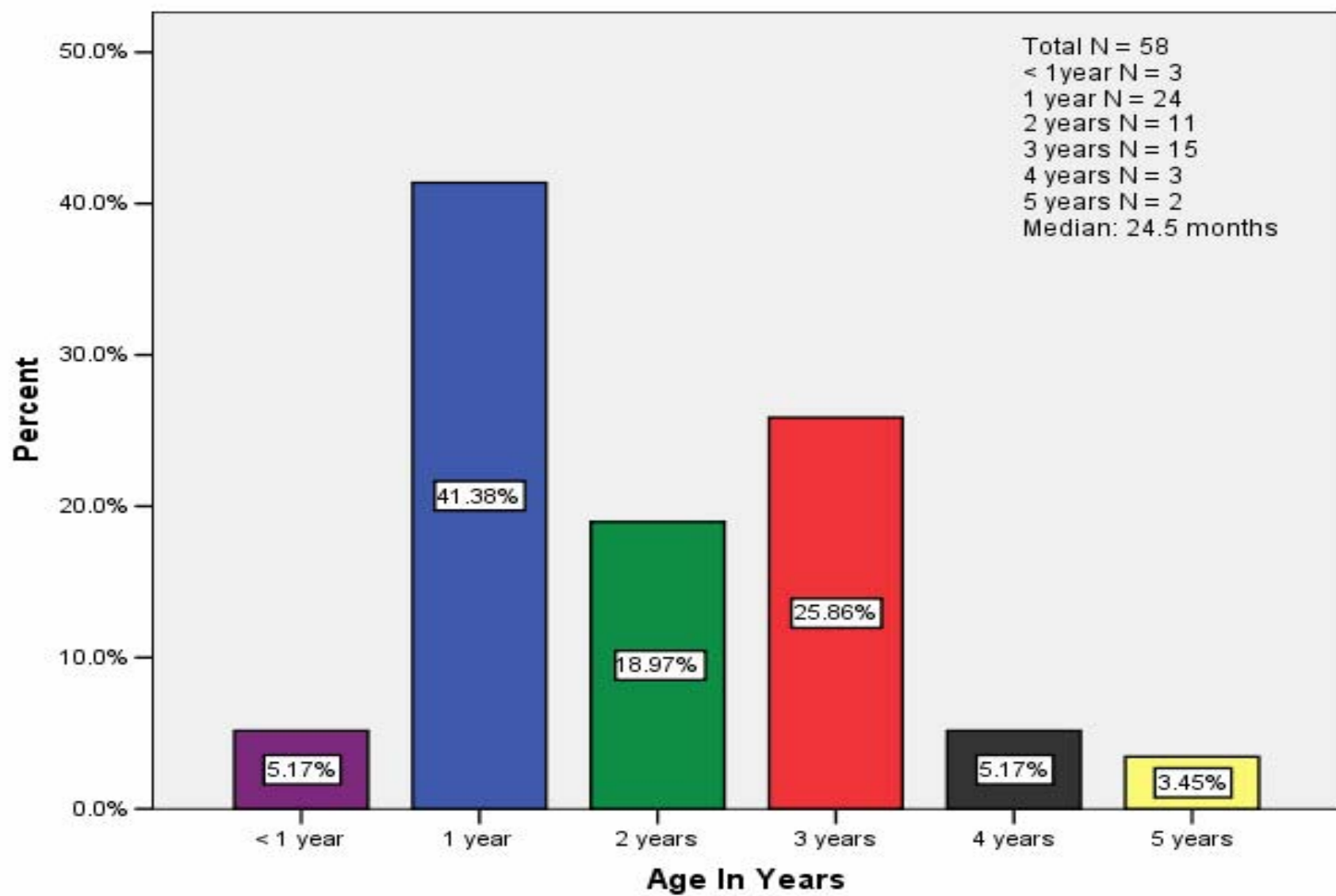
Materials and Methods

- Case series study based on epidemiologic investigations conducted by the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC)
- CPSC operates the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS),
 - National probability sample of hospitals in US
 - Collect patient information for emergency visit involving injuries associated with consumer products
- N = 58, age range 9 months – 61 months
- All were deaths classified as “accidental drownings” or “complications from drowning” in pools
- Case series from 2003-2006
 - Multiple sources of notification that prompted investigation
 - Not a complete representation of all cases
 - Goal: look for trends that may be important for prevention messages

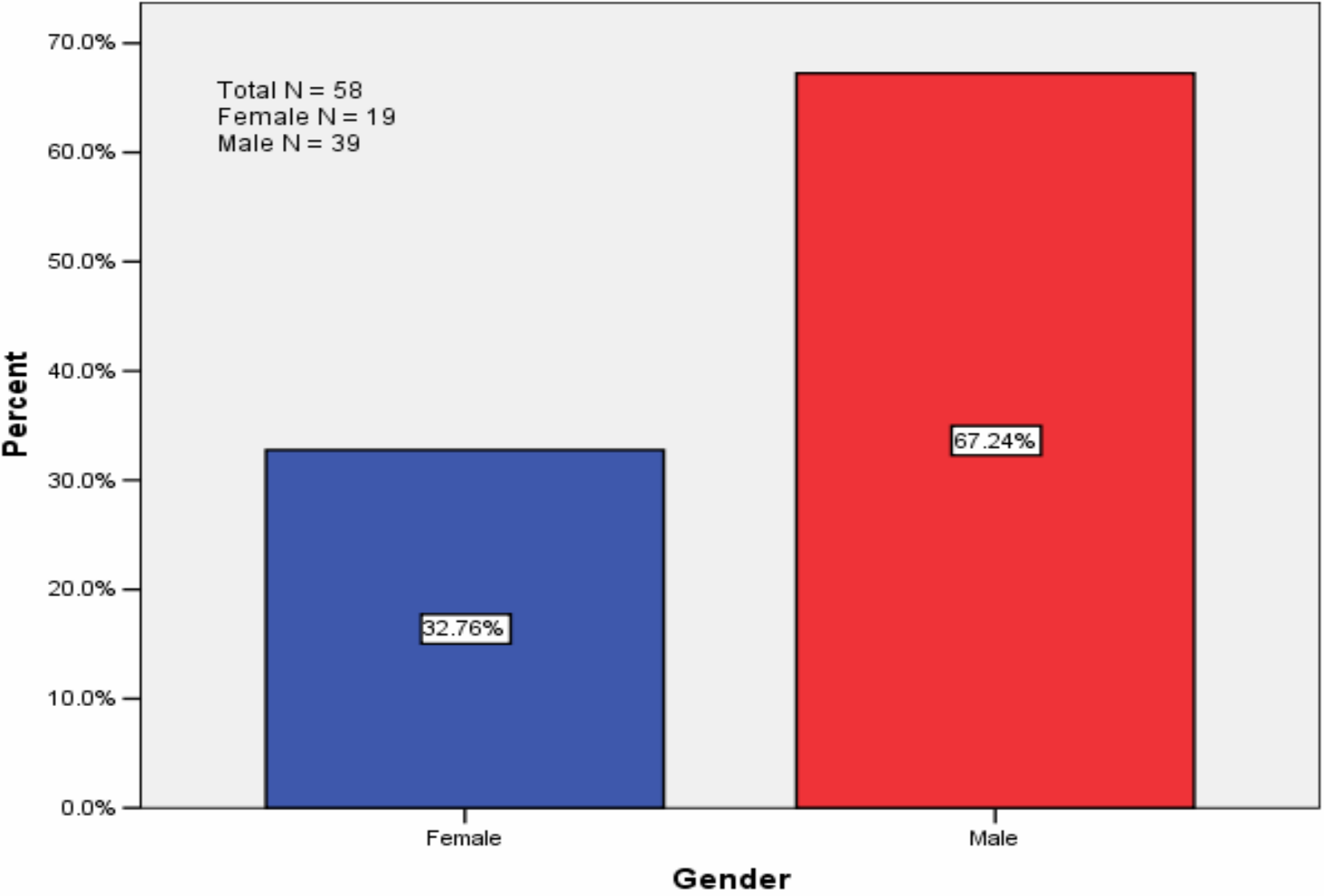
Materials and Methods

- CPSC Epidemiologic Investigation Data Sources
 - Multiple: Law enforcement investigations, medical examiners reports, personal or telephone interviews with survivor families, visits to event location, newspaper accounts
- Descriptive Analysis: SPSS version 13
- Other data sources available for future analytical studies include vital statistics data for drowning deaths, and hospital discharge and emergency department data (beginning in 2005) for near-drownings

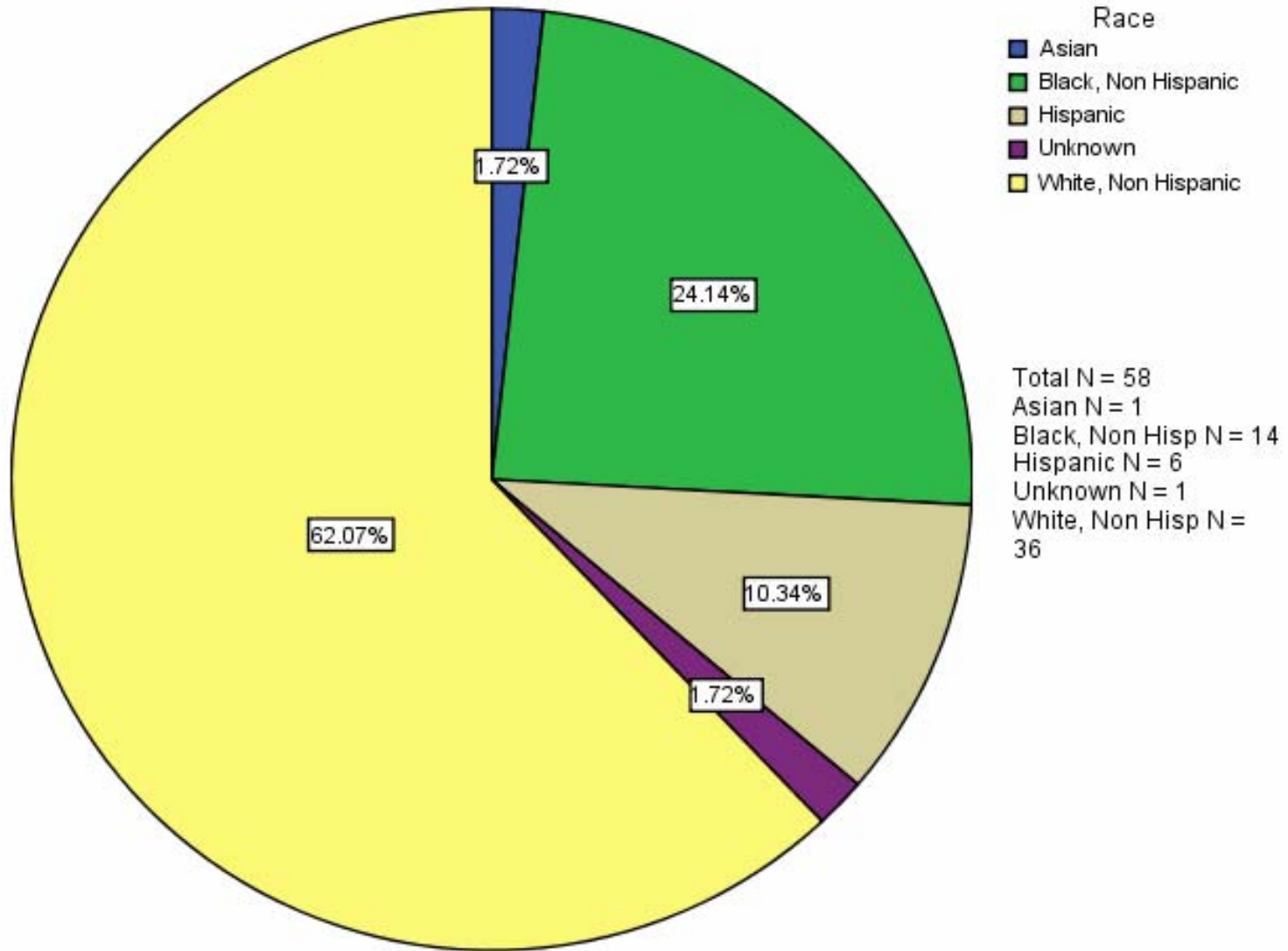
Decedents by Age in Years



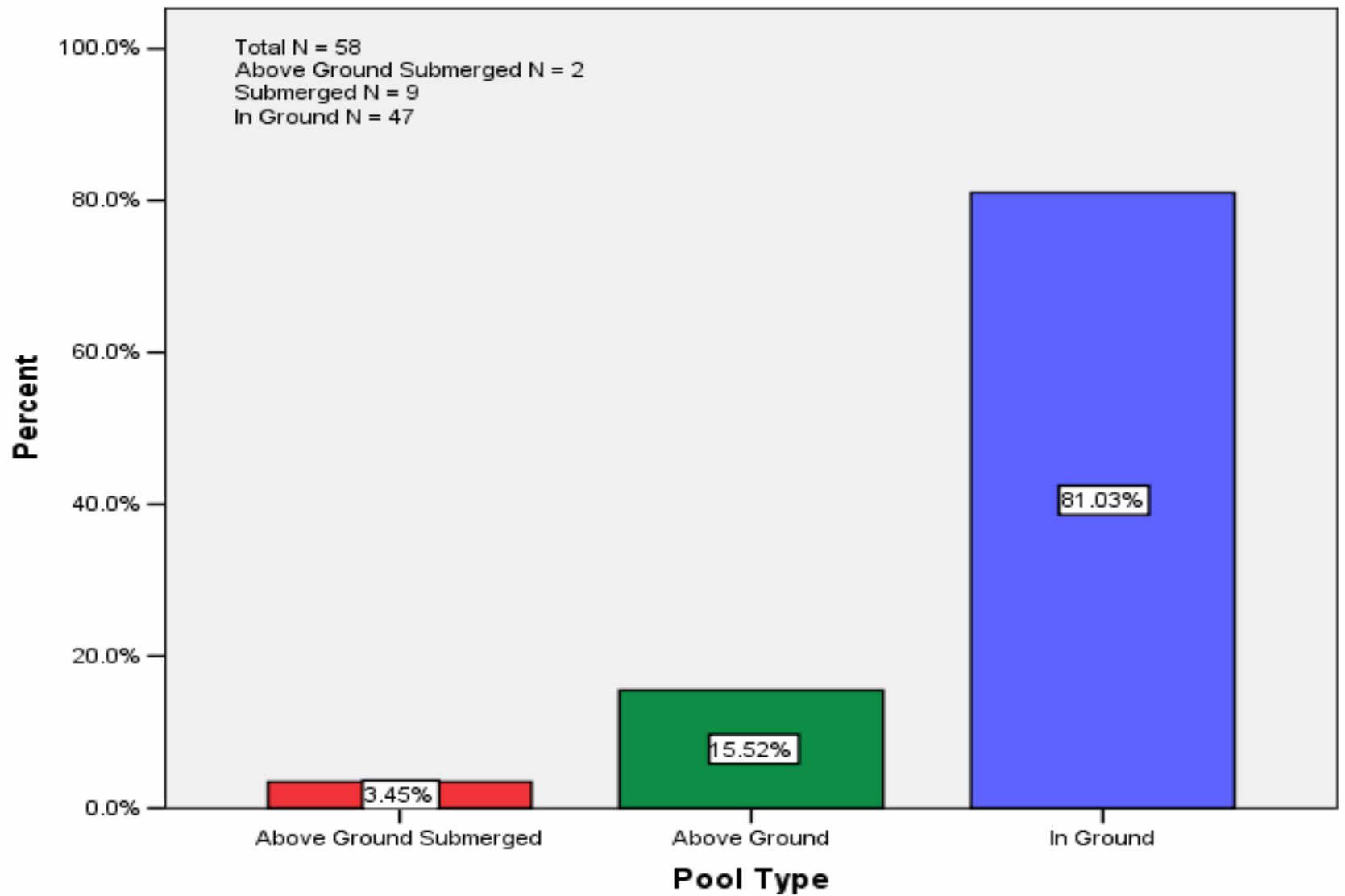
Decedents by Gender



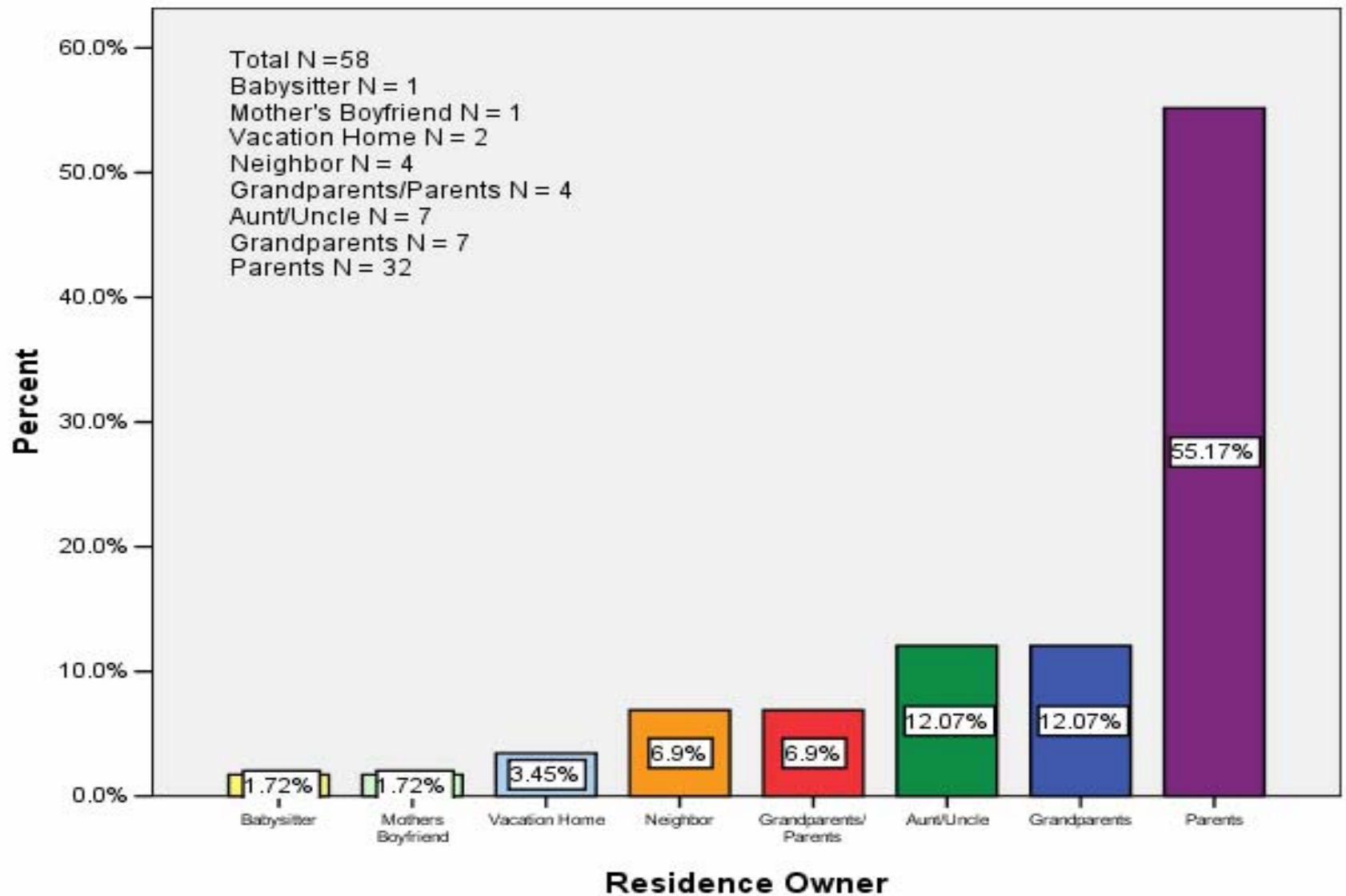
Decedents by Race



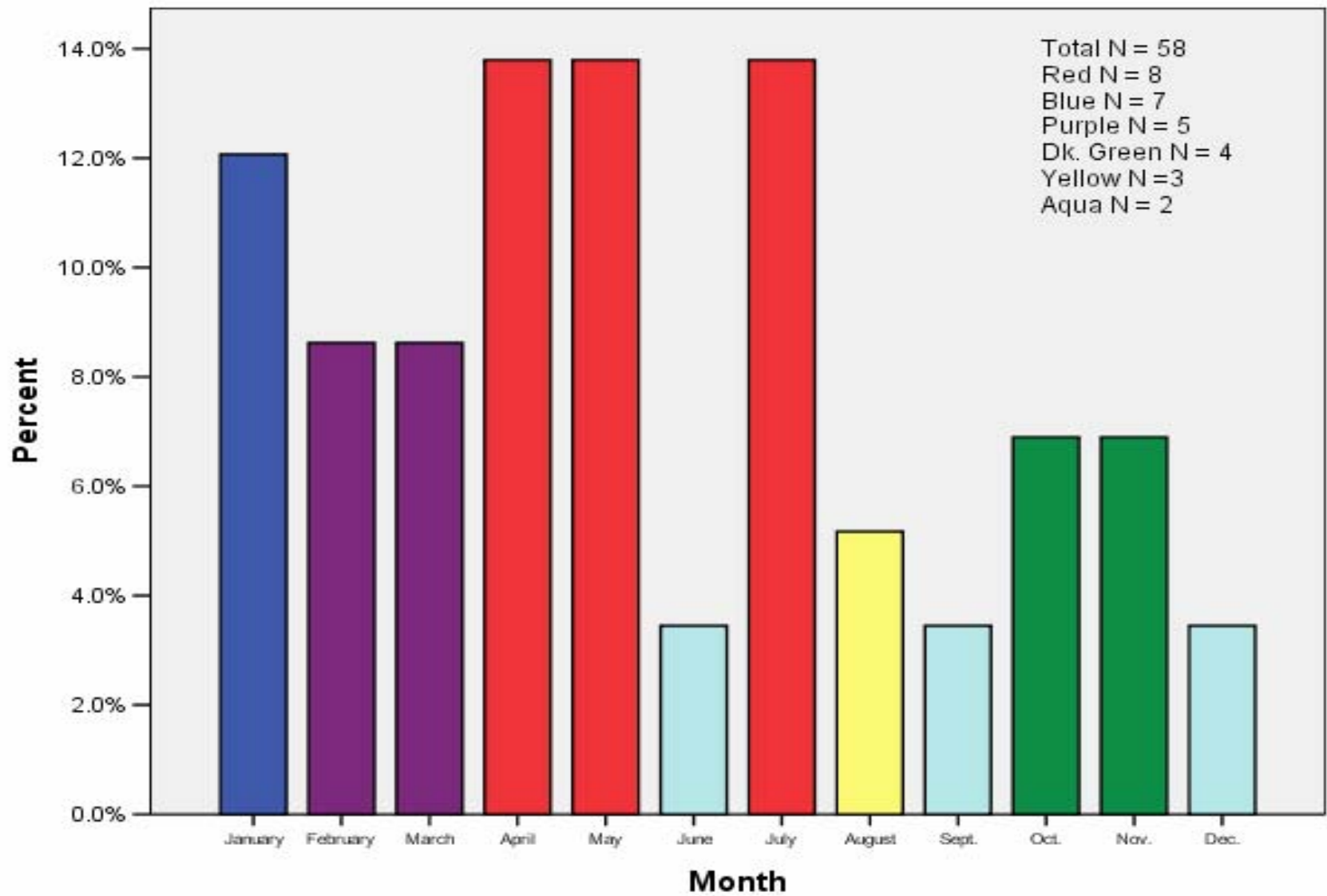
Drowning Event by Pool Type



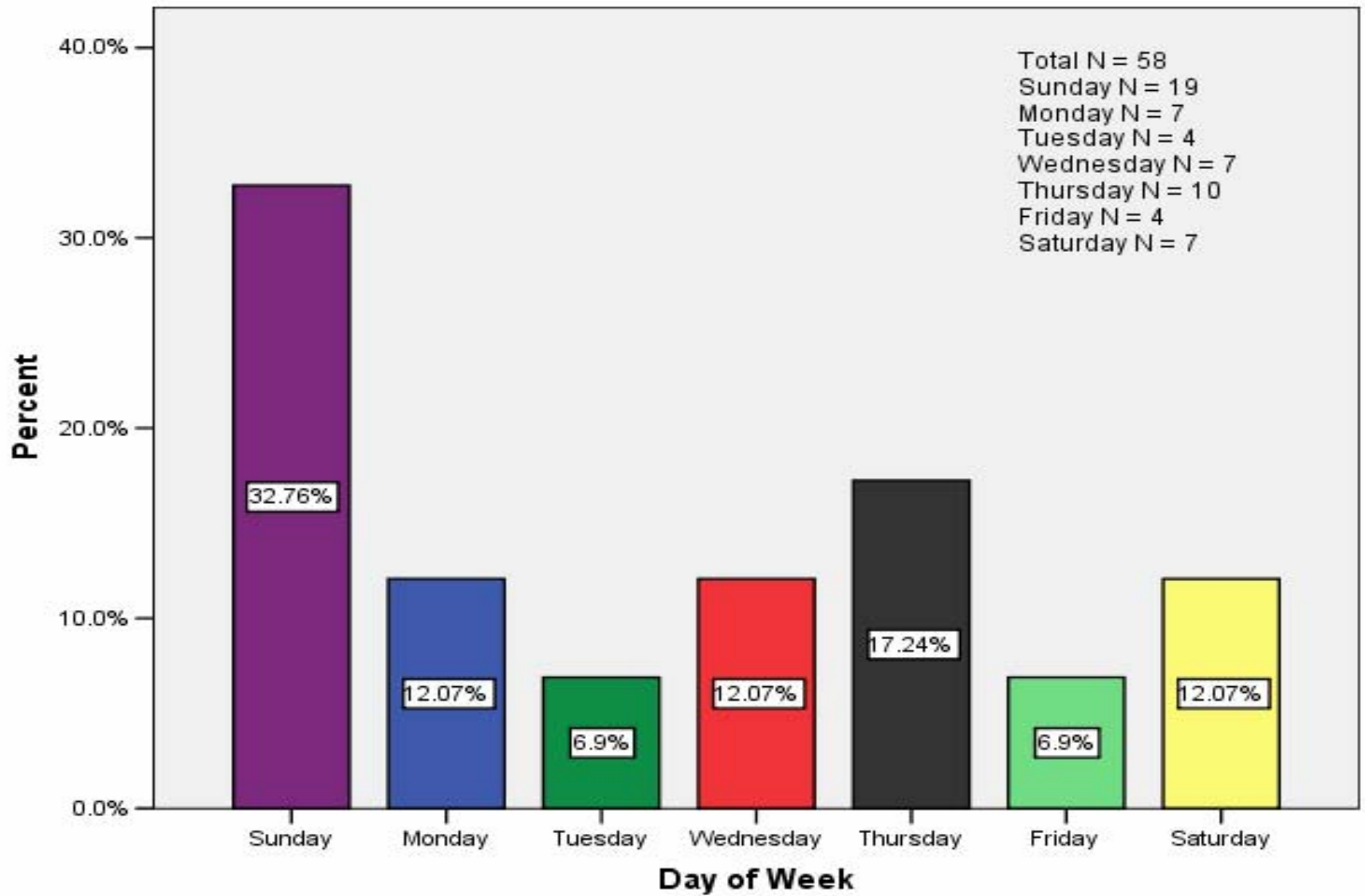
Drowning Event Location by Residence Owner



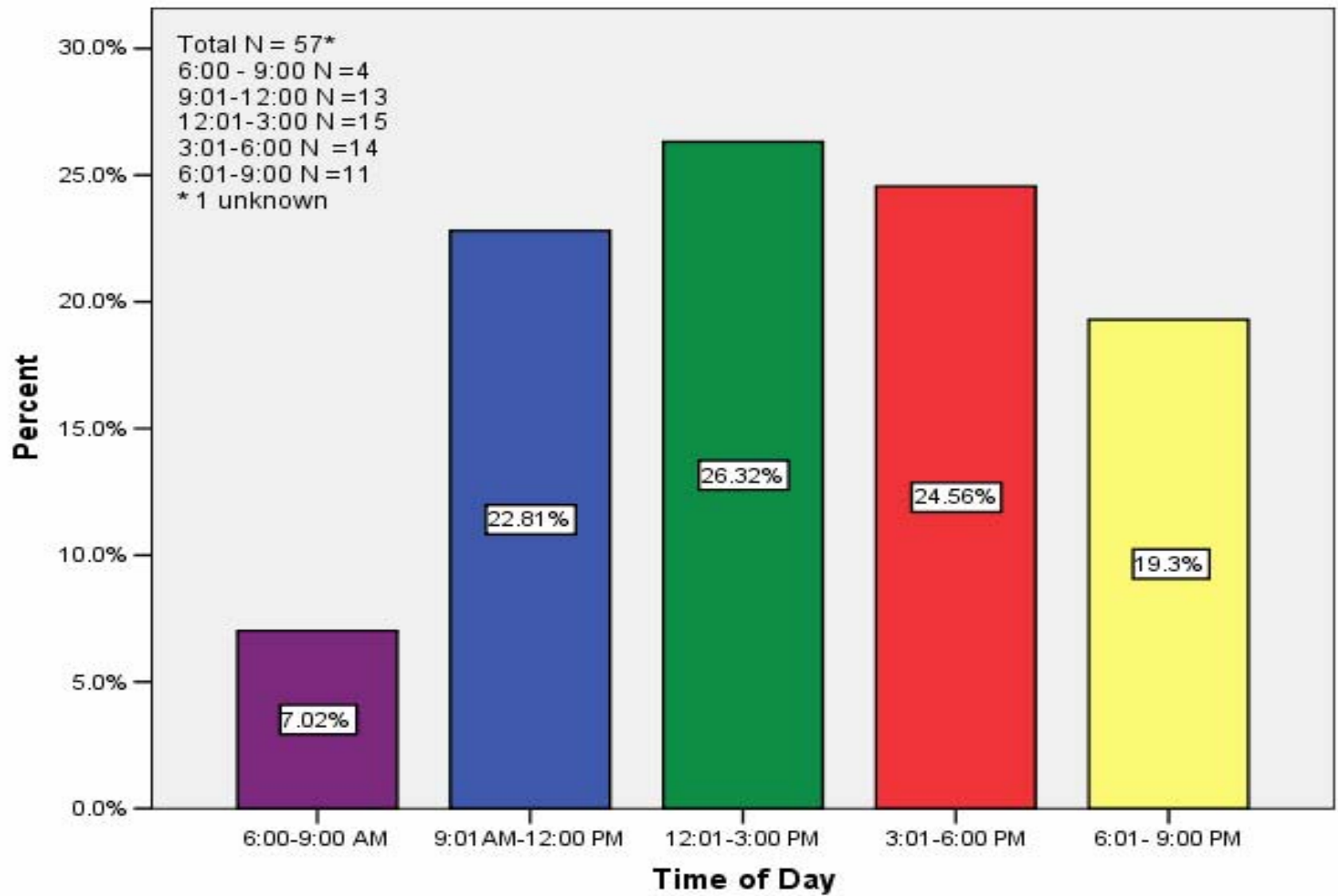
Drowning Event by Month



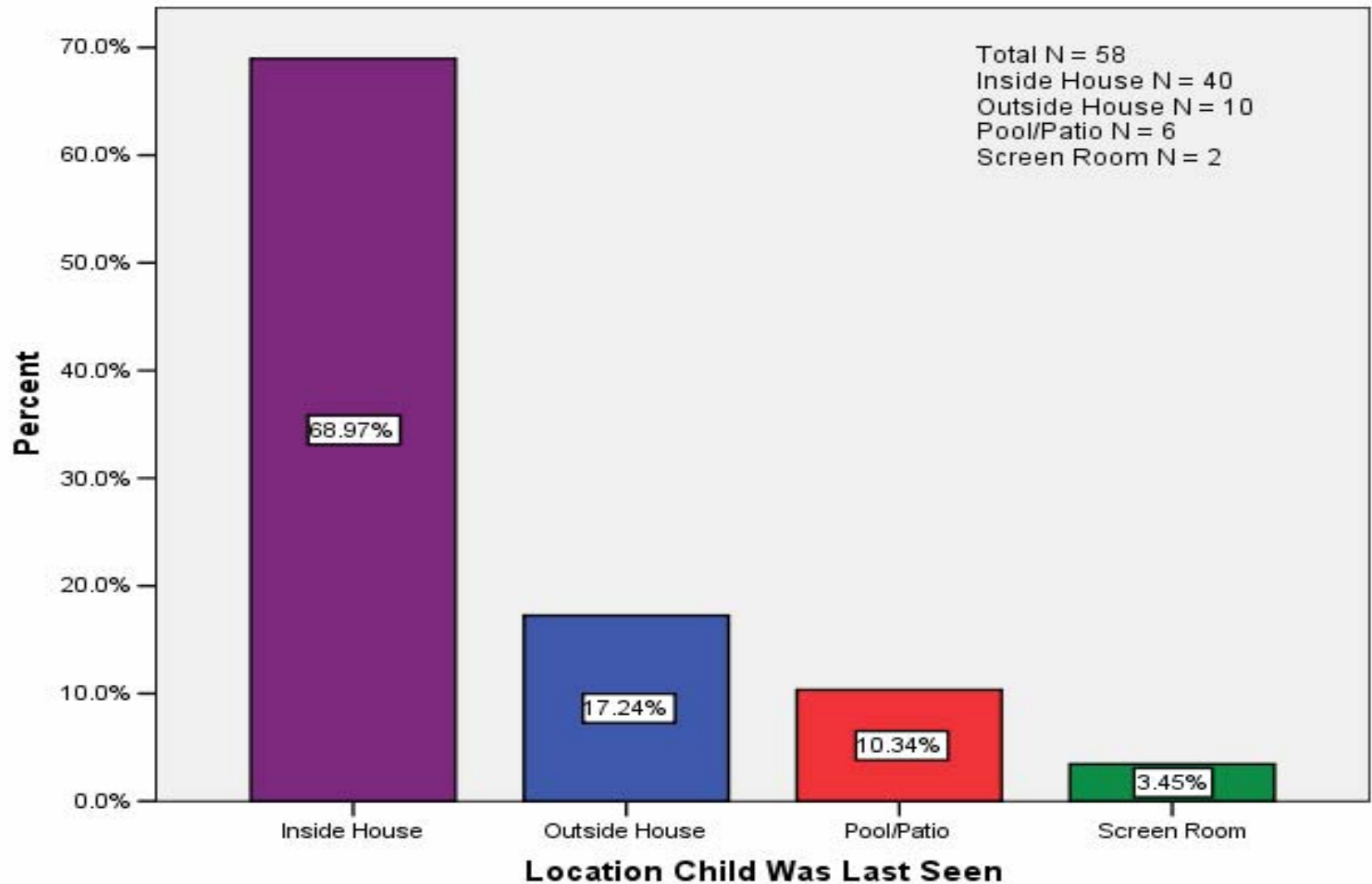
Drowning Event By Day of Week



Drowning Event By Time of Day



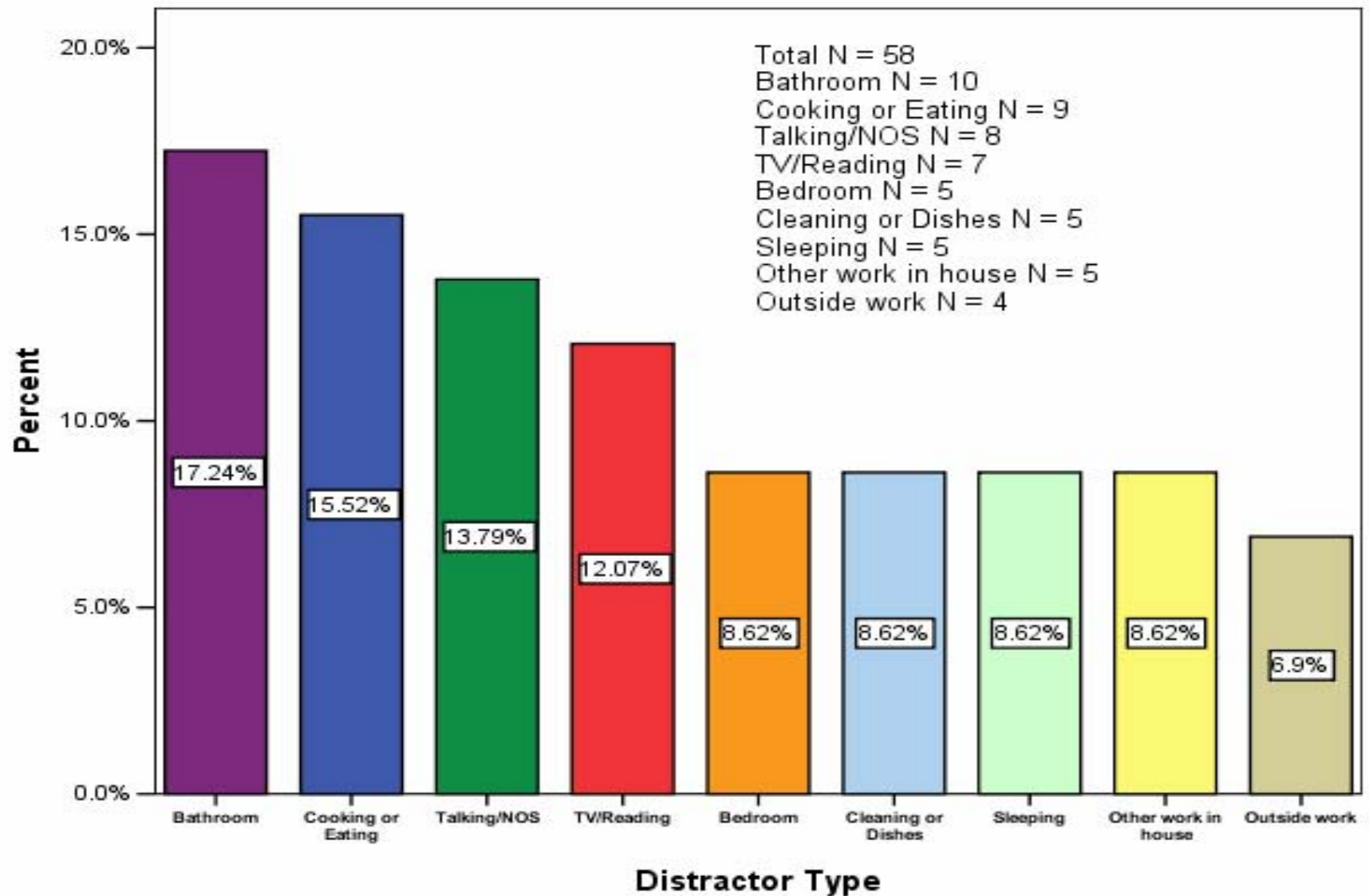
Drowning Event By Location Child Was Last Seen



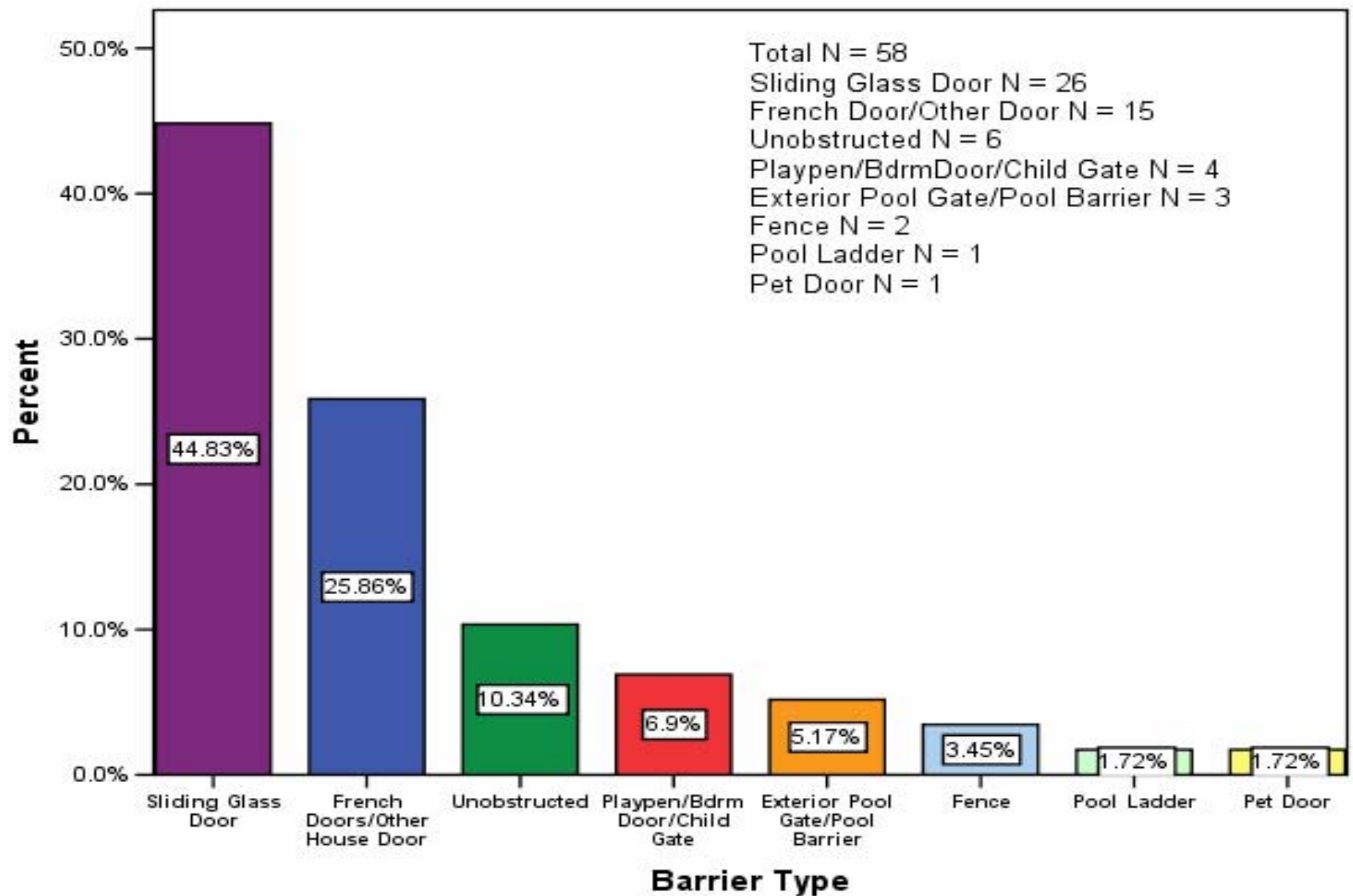
Primary Caregiver at time of Event

Caregiver	Frequency	Percent
Mother	19	32.8%
Father	9	15.5%
Grandparent	7	12.1%
Two Adult Relatives	6	10.3%
Aunt/Uncle/Cousin	5	8.6%
Mother and Father	4	6.9%
Juvenile(s)	4	6.9%
Babysitter	2	3.4%
Maid	1	1.7%
Mother's Boyfriend	1	1.7%

Drowning Event by Caregiver Distraction Type



Drowning Event by Primary Barrier Breached to Enter Pool



Other Interesting Findings

- 19% (N = 11) had “murky” pool conditions
 - In a few cases, this delayed finding the child due to low or no visibility within pool
- 31% had toys or swim gear in pool
 - May have attracted children to water
- 91 % (N = 53) decedents were Florida residents
- 69 % of decedents were from 2 parent families
- 93 % (N = 54) were able to walk
 - 1.7% (N = 1) only was able to crawl
- 29 % (N = 17) had some kind of warning event
- For 83% of drownings, the median amount of time the child was estimated to be missing was 11-12 minutes

Other Interesting Findings

- 86 % (N=50) of decedents were healthy
 - 12% (N=7) had some type of chronic or acute illness
- Only one child (1.7%) was noted to have been a swimmer
 - Not documented in 39.7% (N =23) cases
- In 76% (N=44) death occurred within 24 hours of event
- Alcohol and drugs were not noted to be a factor in any of the events
- 12 % of events (N = 7) occurred during a gathering or party
- 17% (N = 10) homes where the drowning occurred had hurricane damage, but this was not a direct causal factor in any drownings

Key Summary Points

- Most children who drown in Florida are state residents, not visitors
- About 2/3 are male
- Most are too young to have learned to swim
- Residential swimming pool deaths occur year round due to continual access
 - Overall, drowning deaths have a seasonal pattern
- About half of decedents had a parent as the primary caregiver at the time of the event
- About 2/3 of children were last seen in the house prior to the drowning

Key Summary Points

- Primary barrier breached in 71% of events was a door
 - Sliding glass door, French doors, other house door
- Even when appropriate barriers in place, safety precautions not always observed
- Most drownings occurred within a matter of minutes while caregiver was engaged in some type of routine activity within the home

Prevention Strategies

- “Keep Your Eyes on the Kids”
 - FDOH Office of Injury Prevention (OIP) campaign in May – June 2006 in conjunction with county health departments, Children’s Medical Services, and Safe Kids coalitions
 - Message: Supervise children near water
- FDOH OIP has partnership with Denny’s Restaurants to promote child safety
- FDOH OIP is working with traditional and non-traditional partners at the state and local levels to prevent toddler drownings

Prevention: Water Watcher Tag



Water Watcher Pledge

To help protect children from drowning, I will . . .

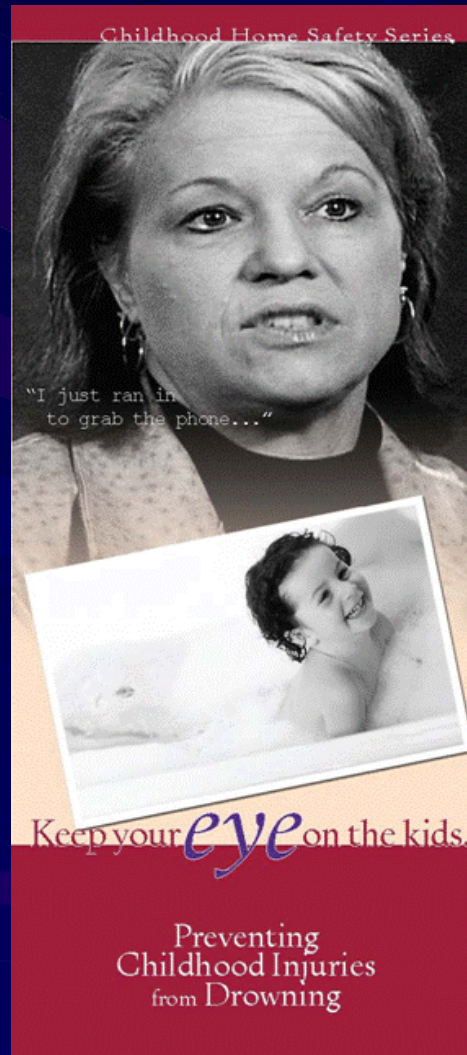
- ★ Constantly watch the children who are in or near water and keep them within reach.
- ★ Give this tag to another adult who agrees to actively watch the children if I need to leave for any reason.
- ★ Make sure rescue equipment is easily accessible. Keep telephone and emergency numbers with me.
- ★ Latch gates, lock doors, use alarms and create two or more barriers to the pool, spa, or any water.
- ★ Once I leave the water, I will make sure a child cannot return without my knowledge.



Drowning is silent and fast. Supervision is your child's best protection.

www.imsafe.com

Drowning Prevention Brochure



Broward County Bus Public Service Announcement

