



Regional Status Report on Drowning in **South-East Asia**



World Health
Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR

South-East Asia

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Foreword



REGIONAL STATUS REPORT ON DROWNING IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Drowning is the third leading cause of unintentional injury deaths in the WHO South-East Asia Region. In 2019 more than 70 000 deaths were attributed to drowning,¹ however this is likely to be an under-estimation of the true burden. Current global estimates for drowning do not include deaths from climate-related extreme weather events or disasters, which could increase the burden by as much as 50% in countries where extreme weather events and incidents are common,² including in the Region.

Most drowning deaths are preventable. However, between 2014 and 2018 the burden of fatal drownings reported by eight of the Region's 11 countries showed no significant reduction. Exposure and interaction with water varies across countries, and there exists a wide range of challenges – as well as opportunities – for improving water safety in different parts of the Region.

As highlighted in WHO's 2014 *Global Report on Drowning Prevention*, and its 2017 *Preventing Drowning: An Implementation Guide*, WHO continues to promote a multisectoral approach that goes beyond the health sector, and which draws on the knowledge and reach of other stakeholders and organizations. It is imperative that interventions factor in local needs and resources, build on progress already achieved, and are attentive to gender, equity and human rights.

This report provides information on the burden and context of drowning, and shares examples of effective drowning prevention initiatives, which WHO will continue to support Member States to implement. By enhancing multisectoral collaboration, promoting strong leadership on drowning prevention, developing national plans, and implementing evidence-based, low-cost water safety interventions, all countries in the Region can prevent the tragedy of drowning and achieve a safer, healthier future for all.

Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh

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¹ GHE data

² WHO global report on drowning





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