



## Linda Quan

### *Recipient of the 2011 Ireland Medal*

Linda Quan is a pediatric emergency medicine physician at Seattle Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center and a professor in the University of Washington's Department of Pediatrics (Center for Child Health, Behavior and Development). Dr. Quan has been involved in research and guidelines at a national and international level in pediatric resuscitation, emergency medical services and drowning.



She was chief of emergency services at Seattle Children's Hospital for more than two decades. Dr. Quan is board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics in emergency medicine. She has served on many committees for the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Heart Association, Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMS-C), CDC Injury Prevention, and recently for the American Red Cross. She has spent a large part of her career on research of drowning, drowning prevention, and pediatric resuscitation for which she has received many biomedical grants. She has received numerous awards and has an extensive bibliography.

She first became interested in drowning prevention when she was a resident in the emergency department at Harborview Medical Center. A 3-year-old girl who fell into an apartment pool was brought to emergency after being revived at the scene. Linda wondered two things — how did the girl survive, but also, why did she fall into the pool in the first place?

That was more than 30 years ago and she has focused on water safety ever since. She and longtime collaborator Elizabeth Bennett combine research, outreach and advocacy to stop drowning. Their efforts to understand the problems and find solutions have made them widely recognized leaders in drowning prevention, with a special emphasis on open water such as lakes and rivers.

Drowning in open water is a particular danger in Washington State and other places that have easy access to open water — especially among teenagers. Quan and Bennett's research helped define the problem by showing that in King County, teens 15 to 19 were at greater risk of drowning than any age group besides preschoolers, and that drowning in lakes and rivers posed the greatest risk to those teens.

In 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded Seattle Children's Hospital, in partnership with the Washington State Department of Health, a grant to create a

policy plan for open-water drowning prevention for children and teens in Washington state. In addition, Linda Quan and Elizabeth Bennett are co-chairing an international task force that's developing open-water drowning prevention messages for use throughout the world.

In every case, research drives the strategies they develop and share through local, national and international partnerships. "The reasons

a 4-year-old drowns are different than the reasons a 14-year-old drowns," says Elizabeth. "You have to tailor your message according to the developmental level of the child as well as the knowledge, beliefs and behaviors of their parents."

For example, a study based on statistics from the state's Department of Health showed a higher rate of drowning among Asian children than African-Americans and whites. Linda and Elizabeth conducted focus groups with Vietnamese teens and parents — all immigrants — to explore the reasons. They discovered a strong belief among Vietnamese that drowning was attributable to fate, but they also learned that providing information about water safety and offering low-cost courses on water skills in Vietnamese might make a difference.

They have approached drowning prevention from a variety of angles, studying how best to collect drowning data, helping pass a state law requiring children younger than 13 to wear life jackets in small boats, and assisting local, national and international organizations such as the American Red Cross, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service and the National Safe Boating Council with their drowning prevention strategies.



*Swimming pools are where people learn how to be safe in water environments say drowning experts Dr. Linda Quan (left) and Elizabeth Bennett.*

"We're passionate about drowning prevention because these deaths are so preventable," says Linda Quan.

<http://www.seattlechildrens.org/medical-staff/linda-quan/>

<http://www.seattlechildrens.org/healthcare-professionals/aar/2009/highlights/research-passion-prevention/>