

Review Red Cross Position on Compression-Only CPR

July 28, 2010

The New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) is publishing articles today that cite a pair of studies on Compression-Only CPR (sometimes called continuous chest compressions, Hands-Only CPR, or cardio cerebral resuscitation (CCR)) and an editorial on the subject.

Key Findings

The key findings of the articles are that dispatcher guided Compression-Only CPR has an equal outcome to full CPR (chest compressions with rescue breaths). However, there may be a trend toward better outcomes in certain types of cardiac arrest victims (heart disease for example). Both articles then state (although not studied) that Compression-Only CPR is easier to learn and is therefore more likely to be performed by a bystander and that it should be advocated in certain situations.

Red Cross Position

These articles validate our longstanding guidance on the topic. The Red Cross encourages everyone to be trained in full CPR and how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED). We support the links in the Cardiac Chain of Survival including: early recognition and early access to the 911 system, early CPR, early use of an AED until professional medical responders arrive and take over.

We recognize that, upon witnessing the sudden collapse of an adult, calling 9-1-1, and providing Compression-Only CPR until an AED is available is an acceptable alternative for those who are unwilling, unable, or not trained to perform full CPR.

The editorial also supports the American Red Cross position that further research is needed. It is important to note that the Red Cross is helping to lead this research through a CPR skill retention study which looks at different educational models and Compression-Only CPR versus full CPR.

Infants and Children

Full CPR is recommended for infants and children since they experience sudden cardiac arrest primarily due to respiratory problems causing a loss of oxygen. Since a child's oxygen levels in the blood are low at the time of cardiac arrest, they need rescue breaths to improve oxygen levels and aid in resuscitation. Despite this, Compression-Only CPR is still better than no action at all.

Additional Resources

In case you receive any inquiries from the media or the public, please review the educational tools, resources and talking points located on the [Compression-Only CPR page on CrossNet](#) which includes the American Red Cross Advisory Council on First Aid, Aquatics, Safety and Preparedness' advisory statement on this topic.

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