



Drowning expert Dr. Linda Quan says the biggest risk to kids is injuries—not illness

# ■ Linda Quan, M.D.

**How did you become an expert on drowning?** I was just finishing my pediatric residency and I was at work at Harborview. They brought in a 3-year-old girl who had drowned and was clinically dead, but they revived her on the way in to the ER, where I was the doctor who admitted her. I was struck by two questions: How did this happen? How was she able to be revived? After some time in the intensive care unit, she walked out of that hospital. Those two questions have made all the difference in my career. I study who drowns and who survives. All these years later, I am an expert who writes book chapters on drowning and prevention for books on injury.

**Do you see patients or push paper?** Well, I still see patients. In the past few years, I've moved from being the head of the emergency room at Children's to being the president of the medical staff. Lately, I have to spend some of my time raising money to do the research we want to do.

**Did some childhood event influence you to be a doctor?** What got me hooked was reading my dad's medical journals. He is a cardiologist. The journals had articles on the ancient history of medicine, the Greeks and the Romans.

**What is the biggest myth about your field?** I wish people understood where the real risks are with children, and they are usually not fever or cold or a cough. The carnage and death most likely come from injury. I wish they could see risks accurately and know they can manage them.

**As a parent, how do you live that yourself?** I let my daughter go white-water kayaking while I was studying drowning...she learned how to choose rivers carefully, she studied with the best people and she practiced her safety techniques. She wore a helmet and a life jacket. That's one way people can manage risk: by taking the time to control what they can.

**What cool technological advance is coming to your field?** I personally like PFDs—personal flotation devices, the old life jacket. They aren't new, but we have been working to make them cool. Teens don't wear them. We held a life-vest fashion show with the public health department recently to show all the new colors.

**What's the most fun you've had lately?** My favorite activity is hiking. Last year, I hiked in Europe, the Sierras and the Cascades. My other favorite activity is cycling. [Her bike is a Pinarello.] We did 500 miles in Italy last week. *S.J.*

**SPECIALTY:** Pediatric emergency medicine (international expert on drowning)

**PRACTICE:** Children's Hospital & Regional Medical Center

**HOSPITAL AFFILIATION:**

Children's Hospital & Regional Medical Center

**EDUCATION:** University of Washington

**AWARDS/HONORS:**

King County Recognition of Public Health Achievement,

2004

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