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Brief Biography

"Martin Barwood is a Professor of Applied Environmental Physiology at Leeds Trinity University, North Yorkshire. Martin is a member of the International Drowning Researchers’ Alliance (IDRA) and is honoured to be the public health representative on the UK’s National Water Safety Forum.

Martin was one of the first recipients of a scholarship for research from RoSPA and this work has informed the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's (RNLI) “Respect the Water” campaign in collaboration with Professor Mike Tipton of Portsmouth University. Martin’s work established the floatation characteristics of people in water and the benefits to buoyancy of air trapped between clothing layers culminating in the safety maxim to “float first”. This evidence base now informs the UK National Water Safety Campaign. The primary aim of the campaign is to provide safety advice to survive accidental immersion into cold water and avoid death by drowning.

Martin’s research group focusses on developing an evidence base to inform drowning prevention interventions including recommending changes to drowning prevention policy and strategy. His recent work has audited the fatal incident data from the UK’s Water Incident Database (WAID) in meeting key steps of the World Health organization’s 2017 drowning prevention implementation guide. More recently Martin’s research group has focused on the use of secondary data combined with geospatial statistical and mapping techniques to study the nuanced nature of drowning with a view to targeting prevention efforts toward specific high-priority areas. His group has also undertaken work to consider key differences between drowning events in-land compared to coastal locations and in unintentional compared to intentional drownings. Martin collaborates with other researchers both nationally and internationally. His work appears in the leading journals in the field. Martin aims to facilitate positive change to the public health approach to drowning prevention through his role on the National Water Safety Forum.”