

## Editorial

# 2020 *Safety* Young Investigator Award: Announcement and Interview with the Winner

Safety Editorial Office

MDPI AG, St. Alban-Anlage 66, 4052 Basel, Switzerland; [safety@mdpi.com](mailto:safety@mdpi.com)

After an extensive voting period, we are proud to present the winner of the *Safety* Young Investigator Award:

Dr. Amy Peden has extensive experience in drowning prevention research, policy and practice, having worked in the field for 13 years and authored 77 peer-reviewed publications and 68 professional reports. Dr. Peden has been the lead author and presenter on over 60 conference papers, both domestically and internationally, and has been awarded over AUD 530,000 in competitive grant funding to date. In her current role as a Lecturer in Injury Prevention within the School of Population Health at the University of New South Wales, she has a combined teaching and research role. She is responsible for the development of the Injury Epidemiology, Prevention and Control course as part of the Master of Public Health and the Master of Global Health. She also sits on the School's Communications, Marketing and Events committee and is co-lead of the Injury Prevention and Disaster Management research theme. Amy holds honorary appointments with the Injury Division of The George Institute for Global Health and the Health and Psychology Innovations (HaPI) Research Laboratory at Griffith University. She is a member of the Australasian Injury Prevention Network (AIPN) Executive Committee and is their Communications Coordinator. She is a member of the International Life Saving Federation's Drowning Prevention and Public Education Commission.

On behalf of the *Safety* Editorial Office staff and award evaluation committee, we congratulate Dr. Amy Peden on her excellent performance and wish her all the best for her future career.



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## **Interview with the Winner**

### **1. Could You Give a Brief Introduction of Yourself to the Readers?**

I'm Dr. Amy Peden, a university lecturer in the School of Population Health at the University of New South Wales and an honorary Senior Research Fellow with Royal Life Saving Society—Australia. I completed my PhD on river drowning prevention in 2019 and currently conduct research while also teaching postgraduate courses on injury prevention and health promotion. I'm a first-generation university graduate and a mum of two young children. I live and work in Sydney, Australia.

### **2. What's Your Current Research and Why Did You Choose This Research Field?**

My research predominately focuses on drowning prevention. I have a particular interest in understanding and reducing drowning risk among regional and remote dwelling populations. Personally, I love to swim and believe everyone should have the opportunity to learn to swim and be able to enjoy the water safely for fitness and fun. Having grown up in a small inland country town of about 10,000 residents, I know firsthand how underserved and under resourced regional communities are and that this brings with it increased risk of both fatal and non-fatal injury. Therefore, I'm passionate about drawing attention to and improving health outcomes for country people through my research.

### **3. Which Research Topics Do You Think Will Be of Particular Interest to the Research Community in the Coming Years?**

For the drowning prevention research community, I think it's vital that we more accurately quantify the global burden of fatal drowning, ensuring we include disaster and transportation-related drowning in our estimates. We must also significantly enhance our understanding of non-fatal drowning, from burden to risk factors and impacts on survivors, family, community, health systems and economies. Supporting emerging researchers from countries without a strong presence in drowning prevention is also something I am extremely passionate about and I have several projects currently underway doing just this. Lastly, and by no means of least importance, is a need to improve the evidence base regarding effective drowning prevention interventions and scaling up those found to be effective.

### **4. Have You Ever Encountered Any Difficulties When Conducting Your Research? How Did You Overcome Them?**

I would say I have been incredibly privileged throughout my research career. However, there have been a couple of challenges. Living in a small town meant I had to leave my town and family to be able to pursue my university studies and, despite immense support from my family, being the first in your family to achieve something can be challenging. I have been lucky enough to have amazing research collaborators and mentors who always encouraged me, which really helps with the imposter syndrome that many early-career and first-generation researchers feel. Additionally, working full-time and having two children while completing my PhD added some complexity to my studies but with a passion for your research, it's amazing what can be achieved!

### **5. What Qualities Do You Think Young Scientists Need?**

I think it is important for young scientists to be resilient. Research can be a very tough and competitive environment and it's important to believe in yourself and recognize the unique expertise you hold. In moments of doubt, remember why this is something you wanted to research in the first place! It's also important to be innovative. Be thinking about new ways to research, communicate your ideas and seek funding to support your goals! And finally, commit to creating positive change through your work.

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#### **6. *Safety* Is an Open Access Journal. How Do You Think Open Access Impacts the Authors?**

Breaking down the barriers to science communication is key. Knowledge should not be hidden behind a paywall and inaccessible to those in decision-making roles or passionate advocates. Similarly, it's important to think about alternative and accessible ways we can communicate our research findings, such as through the mass media, social media, visual infographics, videos and podcasts!