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Experts hopeful new CPR is easier

By Stephanie Nano
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — You can skip the mouth-to-mouth breathing and just press on the chest to save a life.

In a major change, the American Heart Association said Monday that hands-only CPR — rapid, deep presses on the victim's chest until help arrives — works just as well as standard CPR for sudden cardiac arrest in adults.

Experts hope bystanders will now be more willing to jump in and help if they see someone suddenly collapse. Hands-only CPR is simpler and easier to remember and removes a big barrier for people skittish about the mouth-to-mouth breathing.

"You only have to do two things. Call 911 and push hard and fast on the middle of the person's chest," said Dr. Michael Sayre, an emergency medicine professor at Ohio State University who headed the committee that made the recommendation.

Hands-only CPR calls for uninterrupted chest presses — 100 a minute — until paramedics take over or an automated external defibrillator is available to restore a normal heart rhythm.

This action should be taken only for adults who unexpectedly collapse, stop breathing and are unresponsive. The odds are that the person is having cardiac arrest — the heart suddenly stops — which can occur after a heart attack or be caused by other heart problems. In such a case, the victim still has ample air in the lungs and blood and compressions keep blood flowing to the brain, heart and other organs.

A child who collapses is more likely to primarily have breathing problems — and "You only have to do two things. Call 911 and push hard and fast on the middle of the person’s chest."

Dr. Michael Sayre
medicine professor

in that case, mouth-to-mouth breathing should be used. That also applies to adults who suffer lack of oxygen from a near-drowning, drug overdose, or carbon monoxide poisoning. In these cases, people need mouth-to-mouth to get air into their lungs and bloodstream.

But in either case, "Something is better than nothing," Sayre said.

The CPR guidelines had been inching toward compression-only. The last update, in 2005, put more emphasis on chest pushes by alternating 30 presses with two quick breaths; those "unable or unwilling" to do the breaths could do presses alone.

Now the heart association has given equal standing to hands-only CPR. Those who have been trained in traditional cardiopulmonary resuscitation can still opt to use it.

Sayre said the association took the unusual step of making the changes now — the next update wasn't due until 2010 — because three studies last year showed hands-only was as good as traditional CPR. Hands-only will be added to CPR training.

An estimated 310,000 Americans die each year of cardiac arrest. Only about 6 percent of those who are stricken outside a hospital survive, although rates vary by location. People who quickly get CPR while awaiting medical treatment have double or triple the chance of surviving. But less than a third of victims get this essential help.

Dr. Gordon Ewy, who’s been pushing for hands-only CPR for 15 years, said he was "dancing in the streets" over the heart association’s change even though he doesn’t think it goes far enough. Ewy is director of the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center in Tucson, where the compression-only technique was pioneered.

Ewy said there’s no point to giving early breaths in the case of sudden cardiac arrest, and it takes too long to stop compressions to give two breaths — 16 seconds for the average person. He noted that victims often gasp periodically anyway, drawing in a little air on their own.

Anonymous surveys show that people are reluctant to do mouth-to-mouth, Ewy said, partly because of fear of infections.

"When people are honest, they’re not going to do it," he said. "It’s not only the yuck factor."

In recent years, emergency service dispatchers have been coaching callers in: hands-only CPR rather than telling them how to alternate breaths and compressions.
Atwater will face probation revocation

A delayed effort is under way to revoke the probation of a man who was under the purview of Wake's probation office when he was implicated in the killing of a UNC student leader.

BY SARAH OVASKA
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — Wake prosecutors and probation officers restarted a delayed attempt Monday to revoke Demario James Atwater's probation, the same day he and another suspect were indicted in the killing of Eve Carson, the UNC student body president.

Atwater, 21, and Laurence Alvin Lovette, a 17-year-old Durham resident with a juvenile record, were both indicted Monday by an Orange County grand jury on charges of first-degree murder.

Both were under the purview of Triangle-area probation offices March 5, when Carson's body was found in the middle of a residential Chapel Hill intersection near campus. She was shot multiple times, Chapel Hill police have not said how they think the two suspects came into contact with Carson.

Correction Department officials have acknowledged that supervision was lacking, especially in Atwater's case, and plan to release a report Wednesday detailing the contact their officers had with Atwater and Lovette.

"There's a lot you'll learn," said Keith Acree, the Correction Department spokesman.

On Monday, Atwater, of Durham, was brought into a courtroom at Wake County Public Safety for a 10-minute procedural hearing before visiting Judge Carl Fox of Orange County Superior Court. Rudy Reuffer, a Raleigh lawyer appointed to represent Atwater on the probation violation charge, also was present in a courtroom packed with reporters and cameramen from local news organizations.

Atwater was told he would be back in a Wake courtroom May 1 to discuss the violations further. He said little other than to answer Fox's questions about whether he wanted a court-appointed attorney.

Lovette had been on adult probation a fraction of the time that Atwater was. The teen was put on probation Jan. 16 for a breaking and entering conviction in Durham. Two days later, Duke graduate student Abhijit Mahato was found dead in his Durham apartment. Lovette and one other man have been charged with killing Mahato.

Because Lovette's juvenile record was not available for public scrutiny during his adult court hearings, he was given a probation sentence that only called for monthly contact with his officer. Atwater's case was bounced among multiple probation officers after a 2005 breaking-and-entering conviction in Wake County. He was not put on the intensive level of probation a judge initially ordered, and a June 2007 conviction in Granville County appeared to have gone unnoticed by his probation officers until November. An arrest warrant for revocation of probation was filed in November, but Atwater wasn't served with it until late February.

Atwater came to a court hearing in Wake County on March 3, two days before Carson's death, but a scheduling error caused a postponement until Monday.

At the time of Carson's killing, Atwater, 21, was free despite the probation violation. His case had been looked at by as many as eight probation officers in three years. Also, Wake County probation officials failed to transfer his file to Durham County after he moved there and a Granville County judge ordered that the file he transferred in June.

The maximum of two years that Atwater could face in prison for failing to comply with his probation for the two sentences is minor compared with the penalty he could face in Carson's death. A first-degree murder conviction would result in life in prison or the death sentence, if...
ATWATER
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Orange County District Attorney Jim Woodall opted to seek capital punishment.
Woodall said he hasn't decided whether he'll seek the death penalty.
"I can't talk about any of that yet," Woodall said.
At 17, Lovette is too young to face the death penalty. Woodall set a tentative May 5 hearing to
announce his decision in Atwater's case.
Leaders in Durham, where both Atwater and Lovette lived, will convene April 11 to discuss the probation system's failure to keep track of the two murder suspects.

Staff writer Jesse James DeConio contributed to this report.
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CHELSEA MAKES A CASE FOR MOM

BY RYAN TRACIE BECKWITH
STAFF WRITER

Chelsea Clinton put a full-court press on the Triangle's young voters Monday. In campaign stops at N.C. State University, Peace College and UNC-Chapel Hill, the daughter of Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton made the case for her mother's presidential campaign.

During hour-long sessions, Clinton fielded wide-ranging questions from the audience at each event on such topics as the war in Iraq, the federal deficit and college aid.

On a question from an N.C. State student about the effect of the impeachment scandal on her mother, she gave a similar answer as she did to a similar question at an Indiana college last week.

"It's none of your business," she said, sparking a wave of applause. "I'm sure there are things in your family that you don't think are anyone's business either."

Chelsea Clinton's techniques

Clinton brought a low-key style to her campaign stops Monday. Below, a few of the techniques she employed at events on three Triangle-area campuses and at a Young Democrats event on Saturday in Research Triangle Park:

1. Be casual

Clinton skipped the lectern and gave a brief introductory speech before taking questions from the audience. Her language, too, was more personal than political.

At N.C. State, she referred to herself as "sort of a numbers dork." She frequently said "Oh, gosh," at the number of questions.

2. Note your age

Clinton made references to being young, although she didn’t oversell it. More than once, she noted that at age 28, she feels old.

At the Young Democrats convention, she pointed out that her boyfriend, Marc Mezvinsky, was in the back of the room. At Peace, she noted that she now has "a boyfriend and a dog" and said that her mother hopes to be a grandmother soon.

"I still haven't figured out what I want to be when I grow up," she said jokingly.

3. Note the youth issues...

Clinton mentioned issues important to your generation, she mentioned Hillary Clinton's stance related to college aid: getting rid of the much-maligned Free Application for Federal Student Aid in favor of a checkbox on IRS tax returns, expanding student loans to cover graduate school and forgiving debt for students who take certain public service jobs.

On health care, she noted that many college students are uninsured during summer breaks.

And when talking about border security, she pointed out that a proposed border fence with Mexico would cut through the University of Texas at Brownsville campus.

"Can you imagine if at Peace you had to walk through a border checkpoint to go to class?" she asked.

4. ... but don't talk down

Clinton was not afraid to get into the thicket on policy.

Occasionally, she used words such as "data points" and got into detailed explanations of criticisms of how No Child Left Behind rates student success or international treaties that the Bush administration has not participated in.

At all stops, she avoided high-flying rhetoric and fist-pumping sloganeering. Her tone was very much a matter of fact even when she got applause, such as when she said the world would "breathe a sigh of relief" when George W. Bush is no longer president.
Texas’ 10% admission could teach colleges a thing or two

Ten years ago, after a federal court blocked Texas colleges from considering race as a factor in admissions, the state, with George W. Bush as governor, came up with an innovative alternative. In an attempt to make affirmative action color-blind, the top 10% of graduates at each of the state’s high schools was granted automatic admission to state universities.

While politically popular, the law was met with skepticism by many experts in both education and civil rights. Some educators feared that even the best students at inner city and rural high schools would never survive academically at the University of Texas. Civil rights leaders complained that the law was rooted in cynicism because it achieves integration in college by relying upon continued segregation of Texas high schools.

Ten years later, we know a little more about the law: It works. Maybe even a little too well, given that the president of the University of Texas asked the Legislature last week to scale it back.

Examples of its success at the University of Texas at Austin include:

- Students admitted under the 10% rule get better grades than other students. Plus, they graduate at higher rates.
- Racial diversity at the Austin campus improved. The number of Hispanic students has risen by 29% and the African-American student population by 32%.
- Economic and geographic diversity improved as well. Before the law took effect, the Austin campus drew from 616 high schools. Now it draws from 853 schools.

University of Texas President William Powers complains that the 10% rule has come to dominate the admissions system. In the next freshman class, it will account for 81% of the students, making it harder to recruit promising students at high-achieving high schools, including minorities, who fall below the 10% line. Powers wants to recruit only half the incoming class through automatic admissions.

Powers raises a fair point, but fixing the problem is just a matter of fine-tuning. The larger lesson is that the law has broadened diversity without running afoul of the courts. Poor white students from rural areas of Texas now get a shot at an elite university, as do poor urban black students. And that provides more diversity than just giving admission breaks to sons and daughters from upper-income minority families, a common feature of more traditional affirmative action programs — which, by the way, we’ve often supported in this space.

Many critics of the 10% law remain unhappy, pointing to the talented students who end up at campuses less prestigious than Austin because they fall below the threshold. But Texas legislators representing rural and urban neighborhoods have dug in against changes. For the first time, their kids are getting a shot at the state’s best education.

Given Texas’ success, it’s reasonable to ask why other states haven’t adopted similar laws. California and Florida enacted automatic admittance plans, but loopholes in both states limit their effectiveness. The plan in Texas deserves another look.