

The Dutch approach to swimming in times of Covid-19

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In the 25 years I worked as an occupational physician in the chemical industry I was “educated” by occupational hygienists, toxicologists, and safety officers on the relationship between health and chemicals. With this knowledge I spent 15 years on the Amsterdam University Medical Centre and specialised in occupational diseases and allergology. In 2010 the WHO asked me to contribute to new guidelines on Swimming Pools and Spas, the same year when I started the “outdoor clinic Swimming pools” (www.zwembadpoli.nl). Together with the TU Delft we investigate swimming pool related health problems in Dutch swimming pools.

Presentation Abstract

A team of the Technical University of Delft, the Dutch Outpatient Clinic of Swimming Pools and two Laboratories on water quality developed specific Dutch guidelines for swimming in times of Covid-19, based upon governmental guidelines, scientific publications and conference proceedings of online swimming pool conferences. These guidelines were adopted by the national branch of swimming pools and spas. To investigate whether these guidelines would be effective to minimize the risk on health effects and Covid-19 complaints in particular, the team observed the fate of aerosols, water quality, the behaviour of public and staff during different swimming activities and potential health complaints in four public swimming pools, financed by crowd funding. All participants (swimmers, pool staff and researchers) were offered a COVID-19 speed-test and they were consulted by a medical physician 5-6 days after the swim, to monitor the development of any health complaints.