



#SWIM
SWIM WITHOUT FEAR

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Swim Without Fear
Research Toolkit

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ABOUT #SWIM – SWIM WITHOUT FEAR

Bulgaria and Croatia are countries where **sea tourism forms a large part of the economy**. Every year, a **large number of children die from drowning** in both countries who **cannot swim or are afraid of the water**. It is a well-known fact that **the fear of water and swimming is very common among children**. **Sport is one of the most powerful tools** that can support the inclusion process and in a gentle way present an opportunity for the mentioned target group.

#SWIM! – Swim Without Fear is an ErasmusPlus co-funded initiative, which aims to use the link between sport and overcoming psychological problems in an innovative and different way – by developing a handbook of good practices that are of benefit to both parents and organizations in the field of swimming. “Swim Without Fear” brings benefits for children - future swimmers and their parents and family, and benefits for swimming clubs and their swimming coaches / instructors.

SWIM Without Fear delivered:

1. **Research** in relation to local needs;
2. Printed edition **Swim Without Fear**, which will help parents and organizations and will be distributed in kindergartens, schools, hotels and swimming pools;
3. **Online platform www.myswim.org** where an online edition of “Swim Without Fear” and guidelines videos will be published;
4. **Test swimming event** in the end of the initiative to demonstrate the methods proposed in the handbook “Swim Without Fear”.

#SWIM is implemented by a consortium composed by: Bulgarian sports development association in cooperation with Association of Bulgarian Swimmers and Vere Montis – active sport NGO from Croatia.

Find more about swimming in early age and follow the project at **www.myswim.org**



EXPLANATION OF HYDROPHOBIA (FEAR OF WATER) IN YOUNG CHILDREN

Hydrophobia, commonly known as the fear of water, is a natural and common reaction that some young children experience. It's important to differentiate between a healthy caution around water and an intense, irrational fear that can hinder a child's ability to enjoy water-related activities. Hydrophobia typically emerges between the ages of 4 to 6 and can have various causes.

Causes:

- **Unfamiliar Environment:** Water can be an unfamiliar and unpredictable element for young children. The vastness and depth of pools or bodies of water may seem overwhelming to them.
- **Lack of Exposure:** Limited exposure to water-related activities can contribute to apprehension and fear. Children who haven't had many opportunities to interact with water might find it unsettling.
- **Previous Negative Experience:** A single negative or traumatic experience, such as accidental immersion or swallowing water, can lead to fear and anxiety around water.
- **Overprotective Reactions:** Parents' or caregivers' heightened anxiety or overprotective reactions to water can inadvertently transfer their fear to the child.
- **Imagination:** Children's vivid imaginations can sometimes create irrational fears, including the fear of water, especially if they've heard stories or seen portrayals of water-related accidents.





Signs and Symptoms:

- **Avoidance:** Children might refuse to participate in water activities, whether it's bath time, swimming lessons, or even playing with water toys.
- **Anxiety:** Physical symptoms of anxiety, such as crying, trembling, or clinging to a caregiver, might arise when near water.
- **Resistance:** Children might display resistance by crying, screaming, or becoming physically rigid when approached with water-related situations.
- **Verbal Expression:** Verbalizing fears like "I don't want to get wet" or "I'm scared of water" are common signs of hydrophobia.
- **Addressing Hydrophobia:** It's crucial to address hydrophobia in a gentle and patient manner. Here are a few strategies:
 - **Gradual Exposure:** Introduce water activities in a gradual and non-threatening way. Start with activities like water play in a controlled and familiar environment.
 - **Positive Association:** Create positive associations with water through fun and enjoyable activities. Make bath time playful and engaging.
 - **Supportive Environment:** Foster a safe and supportive environment where the child feels comfortable expressing their fears.
 - **Encouragement:** Use positive reinforcement and encouragement to help build the child's confidence around water.
 - **Role Modeling:** Demonstrate a calm and relaxed attitude around water to set a positive example.
 - **Seek Professional Help:** If the fear persists and significantly affects the child's well-being, consider consulting a child psychologist or therapist with experience in working with young children.

Remember, each child's experience is unique, and overcoming hydrophobia requires patience, understanding, and a supportive approach. By gradually helping them build positive associations with water, you can guide them towards embracing water activities with confidence and joy.





IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING HYDROPHOBIA AT AN EARLY AGE

Hydrophobia, the fear of water, is a common and natural reaction in some young children. Addressing this fear at an early age is essential for a child's holistic development and overall well-being. By providing the necessary support and guidance, parents and caregivers can help children overcome hydrophobia and develop a positive relationship with water, enabling them to enjoy water-related activities throughout their lives.

Early Intervention Benefits:

- **Foundation for Lifelong Skills:** Overcoming hydrophobia in early childhood lays the foundation for developing crucial water safety and swimming skills. These skills are not only valuable for recreation but also play a pivotal role in preventing water-related accidents.
- **Positive Associations:** Addressing hydrophobia early helps children associate water with positive experiences. This positive association carries forward as they grow, fostering a sense of comfort and enjoyment around water activities.
- **Development of Coping Mechanisms:** Overcoming fears in early childhood enhances a child's ability to manage stress and anxiety in various situations. This resilience can positively impact their emotional well-being and overall confidence.
- **Social Integration:** Water-related activities are often a part of social interactions, whether in family gatherings, school outings, or community events. Overcoming hydrophobia early ensures that children can participate fully in such activities without feeling left out.
- **Building Confidence:** Successfully addressing hydrophobia boosts a child's self-esteem and confidence. The sense of accomplishment gained from conquering their fear can empower them to tackle other challenges in life.

Long-Term Impact:

- **Water Safety:** Learning about water safety and swimming skills from an early age reduces the risk of drowning incidents, a significant concern for young children. These skills are invaluable, potentially saving lives in emergencies.
- **Enjoyment of Recreation:** Overcoming hydrophobia allows children to enjoy recreational water activities without anxiety. Swimming, beach outings, and water sports become pleasurable experiences rather than sources of stress.
- **Health and Physical Fitness:** Regular water-related activities contribute to physical fitness, helping children develop strong muscles, coordination, and cardiovascular health. Overcoming hydrophobia encourages a more active and healthy lifestyle.
- **Confidence in Learning:** Successfully tackling and overcoming challenges fosters a growth mindset. Children become more open to learning, trying new things, and embracing opportunities beyond their comfort zones.

Every fear we conquer paves the way for a brighter future, and the journey to overcome hydrophobia is no exception. For our young champions, this journey is a testament to their resilience and the limitless potential they carry within. Like a tiny seed growing into a towering tree, the courage they muster today will bloom into a lifetime of confident strides. As we guide them through the ripples of uncertainty, let us remember that each step towards conquering their fear of water is a step towards embracing the boundless beauty of life's aquatic wonders. The laughter that will replace apprehension, the splash of joy that will replace hesitation – these are the treasures that await those who dare to challenge their fears and rewrite their stories. So let us stand hand in hand, coaches, parents, and children, as we embark on this journey of triumph, turning hydrophobia into hydrophilia, and unlocking a world of water adventures that await them with open arms.

SWIM RESEARCH

Coaches' perspective

The project “#SWIM! - Swim Without Fear” aim at exploring the intricate relationship between sports participation, particularly swimming, and overcoming hydrophobia in early childhood. By engaging with 163 esteemed swimming coaches in Bulgaria and Croatia, the project seeks to redefine hydrophobia's narrative and contribute to the creation of water-confident generations.

This comprehensive survey encompasses the 163 swimming coaches and sport experts, spanning across diverse regions of Bulgaria and Croatia. From capital cities to small towns, these coaches share their unique perspectives on how early engagement in sports, particularly swimming, can catalyse the journey to overcome hydrophobia. The findings reveal patterns, strategies, and viewpoints that contribute to the advancement of water safety education.

The survey blends quantitative and qualitative data, providing a holistic view of the coaches' experiences and beliefs. The survey delves into the nuances of hydrophobia's challenges and the multifaceted ways sports can empower young swimmers to transcend their fears.

Question 1. What is your current residence?

To get a more complete picture of the respondents' status, we asked them questions about their current place of residence. The survey collected responses from a total of 163 swimming coaches from both Bulgaria and Croatia. Bulgarian respondents make up the majority with 103 coaches, accounting for 63.86% of the total respondents. Croatian respondents consist of 58 coaches, representing 34.94% of the total respondents. The distribution indicates that the survey has a higher representation of swimming coaches from Bulgaria compared to Croatia. There were also two respondents 1,20% who did not specify the country in which they live. (Fig. 1)

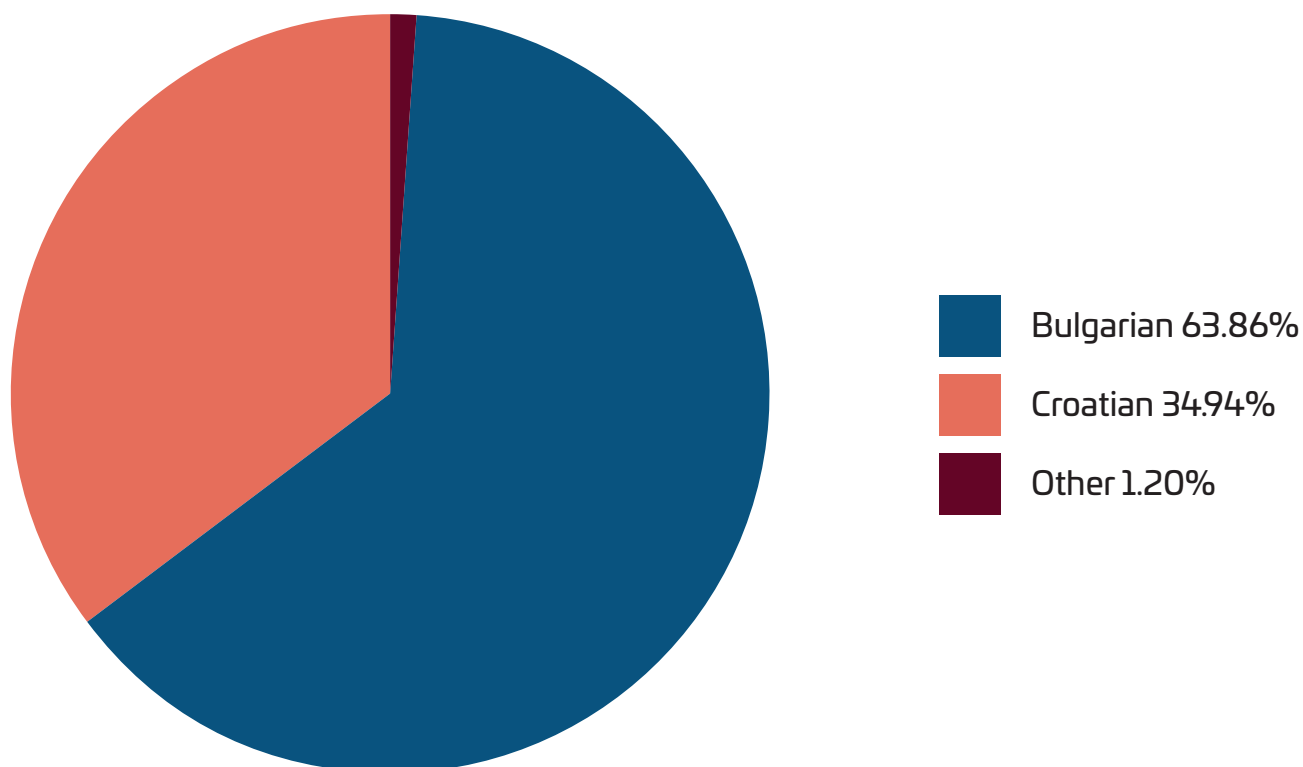


Figure 1. Country of residence



Bulgarian coaches are predominantly from capital cities and large cities, with 80.59% of them coming from urban areas. None of the Bulgarian respondents are from villages. (Fig. 2)

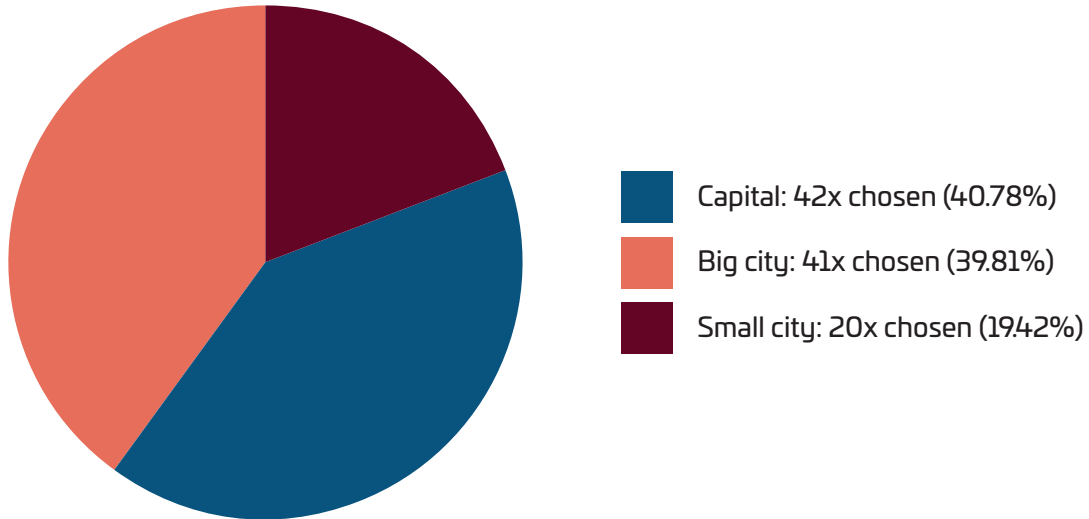


Figure 2 Your current residence in Bulgaria

Croatian coaches show a similar trend, with 87.93% of them coming from capital cities and large cities. One Croatian coach is from a village. (Fig. 3)

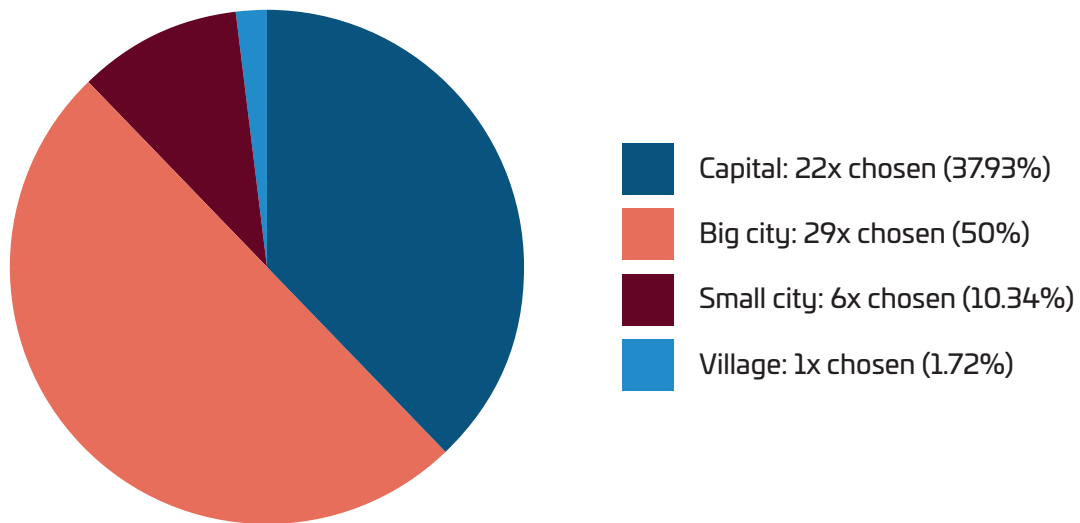


Figure 3 Your current residence in Croatia

The majority of both Bulgarian and Croatian coaches are from urban areas (capital cities and large cities), indicating that coaching resources are more concentrated in these locations. A relatively higher percentage of Bulgarian coaches (19.42%) are from small towns compared to Croatian coaches (10.34%). The distribution of coaches among location types varies between the two countries, indicating potential differences in coaching availability, swimming culture, and access to facilities.

The concentration of coaches in urban areas suggests that swimmers in these regions may have better access to coaching resources and facilities. The absence of village-based coaches among Bulgarian respondents might reflect a lack of swimming coaching infrastructure in rural areas. The higher percentage of coaches from capital cities among Croatian respondents might highlight the significance of these urban centres in terms of swimming coaching.



Question 2. What is your swimming affiliation?

The survey collected responses from a total of 153 individuals with various affiliations in the swimming field. The majority of respondents identified themselves as “Swimming Coaches” making up 47.06% of the total. “Swimming Experts” accounted for 32.68% of the total respondents, indicating a significant portion of individuals knowledgeable in swimming, and “Swimming Club Owners” constituted 8.5% of the respondents, signifying those who have ownership or management roles in swimming clubs. Respondents that are chose “Other” represented 11.76%, suggesting a variety of different affiliations that may not fit into the predefined categories. This analysis provides insight into the distribution of swimming affiliations among the respondents in the Swim Survey, highlighting the diversity of roles and expertise within the swimming community. (Fig. 4)

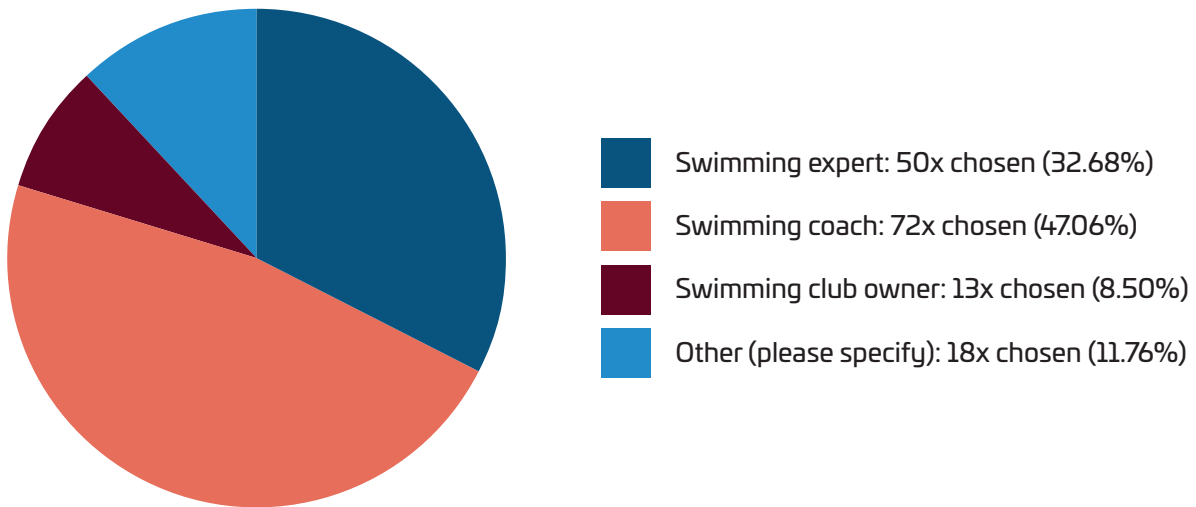


Figure 4. What is your swimming affiliation?





Among Bulgarian respondents, the majority identified themselves as “Swimming Coaches,” with 52 respondents, followed by “Swimming Experts” (17 respondents) and “Swimming Club Owners” (10 respondents). Among Croatian respondents, “Swimming Experts” had the highest count with 31 respondents, followed by “Swimming Coaches” (20 respondents) and “Swimming Club Owners” (3 respondents). This breakdown indicates that there are more respondents with a “Swimming Expert” affiliation among Croatian respondents, while Bulgarian respondents have a larger number of “Swimming Coaches.”

Question 3. Information about experience as swimming professional (years)

The average experience among these swimming professionals is approximately 19.25 years. This mean value gives an idea of the typical level of experience within the group. The standard deviation of 1.82 - 40.32 suggests that the years of experience are distributed around the mean. This range provides insight into the spread or variability of experience levels among the respondents. The positive value for the standard deviation (40.32) indicates that the range of experience varies from 19.25 - 40.32 years above the mean. This wide range might suggest that there are a few respondents with significantly higher years of experience than the mean. (Fig. 5)

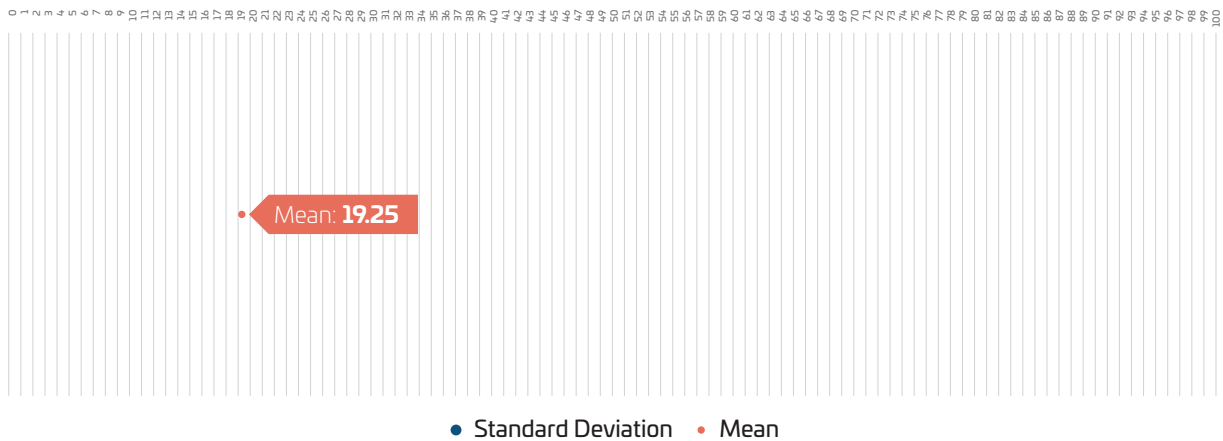


Figure 5. Information about experience as swimming professional (years)

Among Bulgarian respondents, the average experience among swimming professionals is approximately 19.25 years. This mean value represents the typical level of experience in Bulgaria. The standard deviation of 1.12 - 43.56 indicates that the years of experience in Bulgaria are distributed around the mean. The range gives an idea of the spread or variability in experience levels among Bulgarian respondents. Among Croatian respondents, the average experience among swimming professionals is around 12.82 years. This mean value reflects the typical level of experience in Croatia. The standard deviation of 4.43 - 30.07 for Croatia suggests a distribution of experience levels around the mean, with a range that indicates the spread or variability in years of experience. Comparing the means, Bulgarian swimming professionals have a higher average experience compared to their Croatian counterparts. It’s important to note that the ranges provided for standard deviation (1.12 - 43.56 and 4.43 - 30.07) are quite wide, suggesting that there is a considerable range of experience levels among respondents in both countries.

Question 4. Are you involved in swimming trainings?

Not all coaches may be directly involved in conducting swimming trainings or teaching individuals to overcome the innate fear of water. By asking this question, we could filter out respondents who are not directly engaged in training activities, ensuring that we will receive relevant and targeted insights from coaches who are actively involved in training swimmers. We also receive an expertise confirmation by coaches who are actively engaged in swimming trainings and have direct experience working with individuals who have fears or anxieties related to water. Their insights and experiences are more likely to be relevant and valuable for understanding how to help individuals overcome their fear of water. We try to gather information about the strategies they use, the challenges they face, and the successes they’ve had in working with fearful swimmers. By including this question, we can capture a diverse range of perspectives, techniques, and strategies that coaches employ to address this issue. Validating Survey Focus: If your survey is specifically focused on swimming and overcoming the innate



fear of water, it's important to ensure that respondents have relevant experience in this area. Asking about their involvement in swimming trainings helps validate the relevance of their responses to your survey's topic, it helps ensure that we gather meaningful insights from individuals who have the relevant experience and expertise in addressing the specific topic of overcoming the innate fear of water through swimming.

The survey collected responses from both Bulgarian and Croatian respondents to determine their involvement in swimming trainings. Overall, 84.93% of all respondents answered "Yes" when asked if they are involved in swimming trainings, while 15.07% responded "No." (Fig. 6)

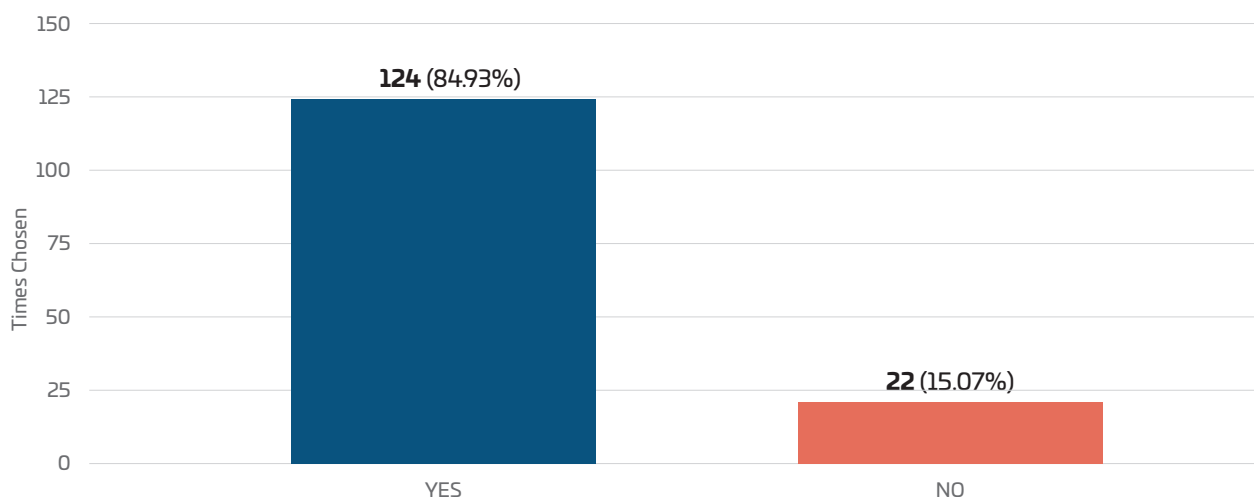


Figure 6. Information about experience as swimming professional (years)

Among Bulgarian respondents, 86.52% are involved in swimming trainings ("Yes"), while 13.48% are not ("No"). Among Croatian respondents, 81.82% are involved in swimming trainings ("Yes"), while 18.18% are not ("No"). The analysis indicates that a significant majority of respondents in both countries are involved in swimming trainings, with slightly higher participation among Bulgarian respondents compared to Croatian respondents. Overall, the analysis suggests that a substantial portion of respondents, both in Bulgaria and Croatia, are involved in swimming trainings. This information is crucial for understanding the expertise and experience of the respondents when it comes to swimming-related activities, which is particularly relevant for a survey focused on topics like overcoming the fear of water through swimming.

Question 5. How often do you work in water environment?

The survey collected responses to understand the frequency at which respondents receive trainings in a water environment. A lot of respondents 58.2% indicated that they receive training in a water environment on a daily basis. This suggests a significant portion of respondents are actively involved in daily water-based trainings. Less than half of them 27.87% reported receiving water-based training on a weekly basis. This indicates that a considerable number of respondents engage in weekly trainings, but not as frequently as daily trainings. Near 10% of respondents (7.38%) mentioned they have monthly water-based trainings. This represents a smaller group of individuals who engage in such trainings with less frequency. The smaller group of the respondents (6.56%) receive water-based training on a yearly basis. This group represents the smallest percentage and likely includes individuals who have sporadic or less regular water-based training sessions. This analysis reveals that a majority of respondents participate in frequent water-based trainings, with daily trainings being the most common. This high level of engagement in regular water-based training suggests that respondents are actively involved in activities related to the water environment, which aligns with the focus of the survey on swimming and overcoming fear of water. (Fig. 7)

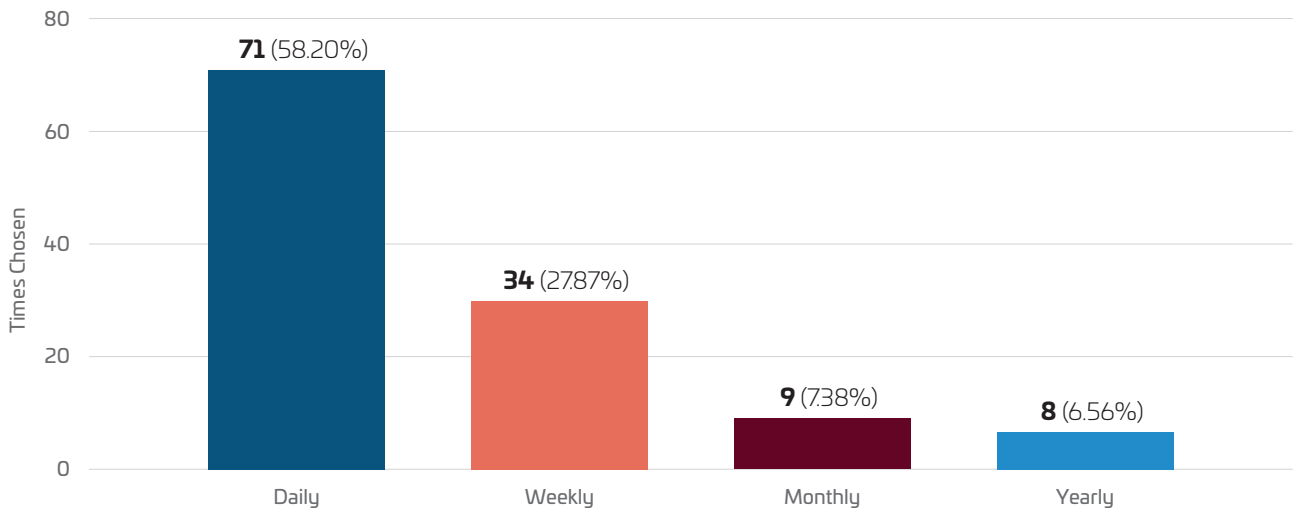


Figure 7. How often do you work in water environment?

The responses from Bulgarian participants shed light on their engagement with water-based training:

A significant 69.33% of Bulgarian respondents reported participating in daily water-based trainings. This points to a strong commitment to regular involvement in activities within the water environment, potentially aligned with swimming coaching or related endeavours. About 21.33% of Bulgarian respondents indicated that they engage in weekly water-based trainings. This suggests that a notable portion of respondents maintains a consistent practice schedule throughout the week. A relatively smaller fraction, comprising 1.33% of Bulgarian respondents, mentioned they partake in monthly water-based trainings. This likely represents individuals who engage in water activities on a less frequent basis. Less than 10% of Bulgarian respondents (8%) reported participating in yearly water-based trainings. This group might engage in water-related activities sporadically or on special occasions. (Fig. 8)

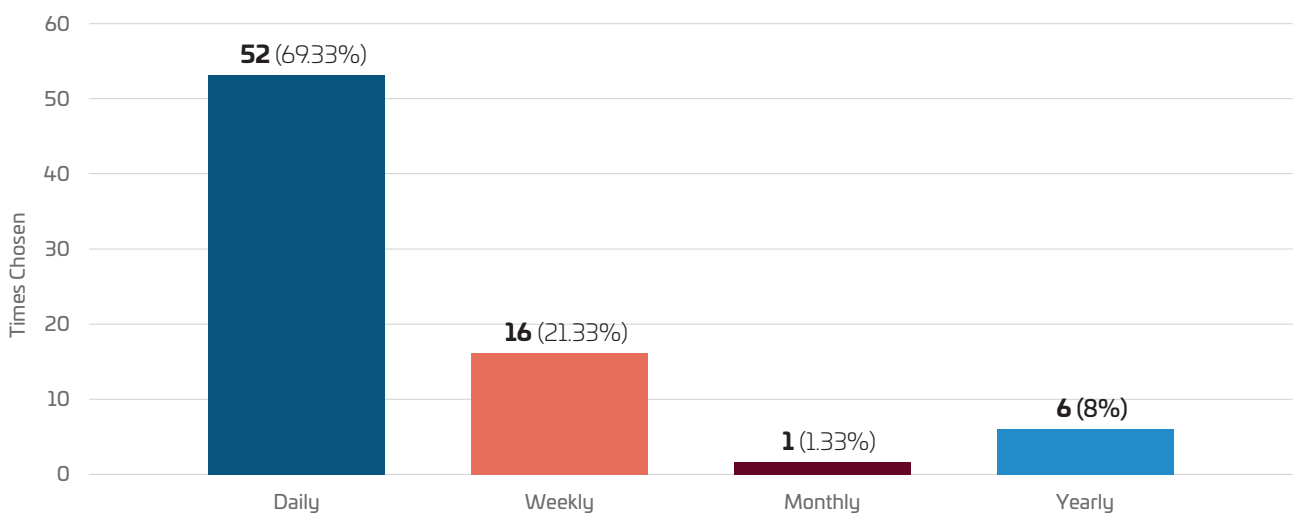


Figure 8. How often Bulgarian respondents works in water environment?

The responses from Croatian participants reflect their frequency of water-based training involvement:

Approximately 42.22% of Croatian respondents reported daily water-based trainings. This group showcases a strong dedication to daily water activities, though this proportion is smaller compared to Bulgarian respondents. A similar proportion of 37.78% of Croatian respondents indicated their engagement in weekly water-based trainings. This suggests a substantial number of individuals who dedicate time to water activities at least once a

week. A notable 17.78% of Croatian respondents stated that they engage in monthly water-based trainings. This group encompasses those who participate in water activities with a relatively lower frequency. A relatively small fraction, comprising 2.22% of Croatian respondents, reported engaging in yearly water-based trainings. These respondents might participate in water activities less frequently and usually on special occasions. (Fig. 9)

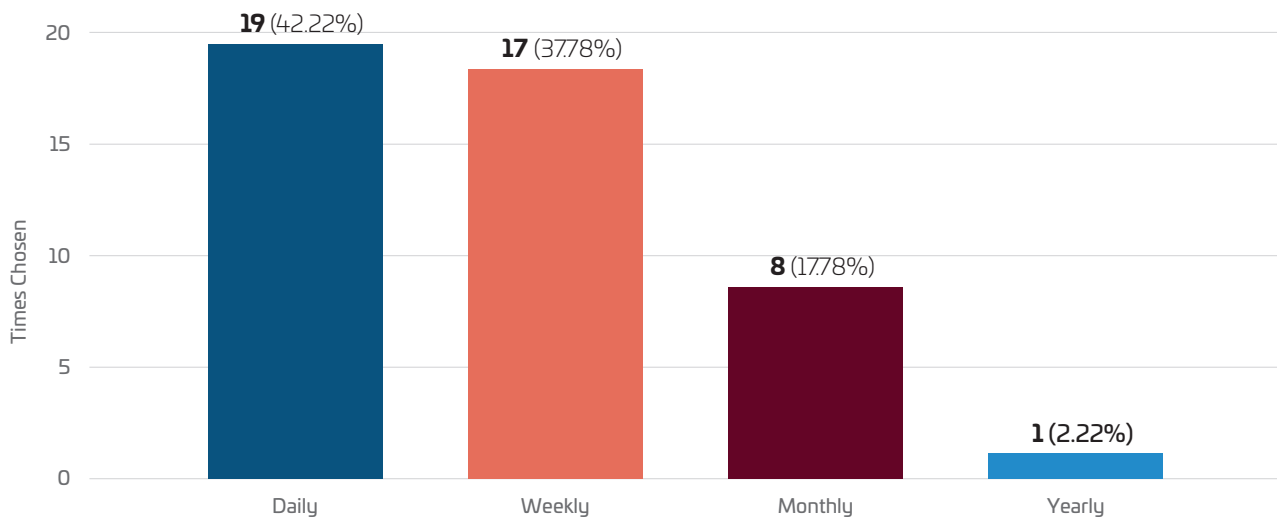


Figure 9. How often Croatian respondents work in water environment?

Both Bulgarian and Croatian respondents demonstrate a commitment to water-based activities, with variations in frequency. Bulgarian respondents appear to have a higher proportion of daily and weekly trainings, indicative of their strong connection to the water environment. On the other hand, Croatian respondents display a more distributed pattern across daily and weekly trainings, reflecting a commitment to regular engagement. The frequency of monthly and yearly trainings is relatively lower for both groups, suggesting a focus on more consistent and frequent interaction with water-based training.

Question 6. What is the main target group you work with?

The survey sought to understand the primary age group that respondents target in their swimming-related activities. The respondents' choices give insights into their specific focus and expertise:

- 0-4 years: A small 2.5% of respondents stated that their main target group is infants and toddlers aged 0 to 4 years old. This could signify that these respondents specialize in introducing very young children to water environments and basic water-related activities;
- 4-6 years: A significant 18.33% of respondents indicated that their main target group falls within the age range of 4 to 6 years. This suggests a focus on preschool and early school-age children, typically involving fundamental water skills and building water comfort at a young age;
- 6-12 years: The largest proportion, 65%, of respondents identified their main target group as children aged 6 to 12 years. This age range encompasses elementary school to pre-adolescent years, indicating a widespread emphasis on teaching foundational swimming techniques and water safety to this age group;
- 12-18 years: A notable 8.33% of respondents reported targeting adolescents aged 12 to 18 years old. This suggests a focus on more advanced swimming techniques and water-related activities suitable for teenagers;
- 18-29 years old: A smaller 5% of respondents specified their main target group as young adults aged 18 to 29 years old. This could suggest a focus on adult learners who want to improve their swimming skills or overcome hydrophobia at a later stage in life;
- 29-55 years old: A mere 0.83% of respondents mentioned targeting adults aged 29 to 55 years old. This



could represent a niche segment of adults seeking to enhance their swimming abilities or address water-related fears;

- 55+ years: Interestingly, none of the respondents indicated that their main target group is individuals aged 55 years and above. This suggests that the surveyed swimming professionals primarily focus on younger age groups and potentially do not specialize in programs for older adults.

Overall, the analysis of the main target group data showcases a diverse spectrum of focus, with the majority of respondents concentrating on teaching swimming and water-related skills to children and teenagers between the ages of 6 and 18. Some respondents also cater to younger children, young adults, and adults in their swimming programs. The absence of a target group aged 55 and above implies that respondents might not actively engage in programs tailored to seniors. (Fig. 10)

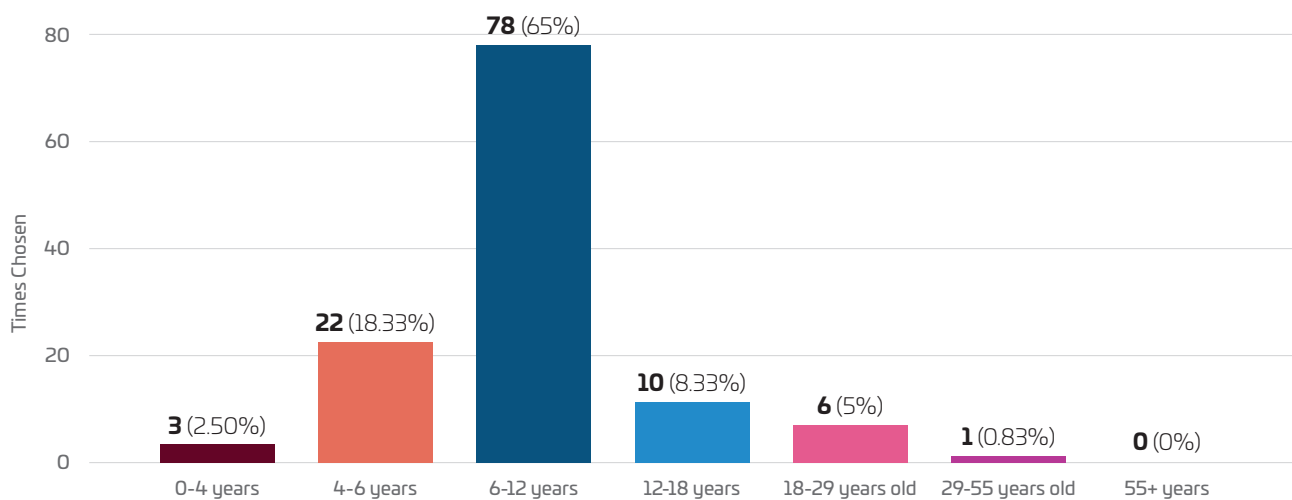


Figure 10. What is the main target group you work with?

Analysis of the target groups by country:

Bulgaria:

The responses from Bulgarian swimming professionals provide valuable insights into their primary focus when it comes to teaching swimming and overcoming water-related fears:

- 0-4 years: A small 2.74% of Bulgarian respondents mentioned targeting infants and toddlers aged 0 to 4 years old. This could indicate a specialized approach in introducing very young children to water environments and basic water activities;
- 4-6 years: 21.92% of Bulgarian respondents highlighted a focus on pre-schoolers and children aged 4 to 6 years. This suggests an emphasis on building foundational water skills and comfort at an early age;
- 6-12 years: The largest proportion, 61.64%, of Bulgarian respondents indicated that their main target group is children aged 6 to 12 years. This aligns with the stage where children are typically introduced to more structured swimming lessons and techniques;
- 12-18 years: A notable 9.59% of Bulgarian respondents mentioned targeting adolescents aged 12 to 18 years old. This indicates a segment of respondents who specialize in teaching more advanced swimming techniques and water safety to teenagers;
- 18-29 years old: A smaller 4.11% of Bulgarian respondents specified young adults aged 18 to 29 years old as their main target group. This might suggest a focus on teaching young adults who want to enhance their swimming skills or address water-related fears;



- 29-55 years old and 55+ years: None of the Bulgarian respondents indicated targeting individuals aged 29 and above. This implies that the surveyed Bulgarian swimming professionals may not actively engage in programs for adults and seniors. (Fig. 11)

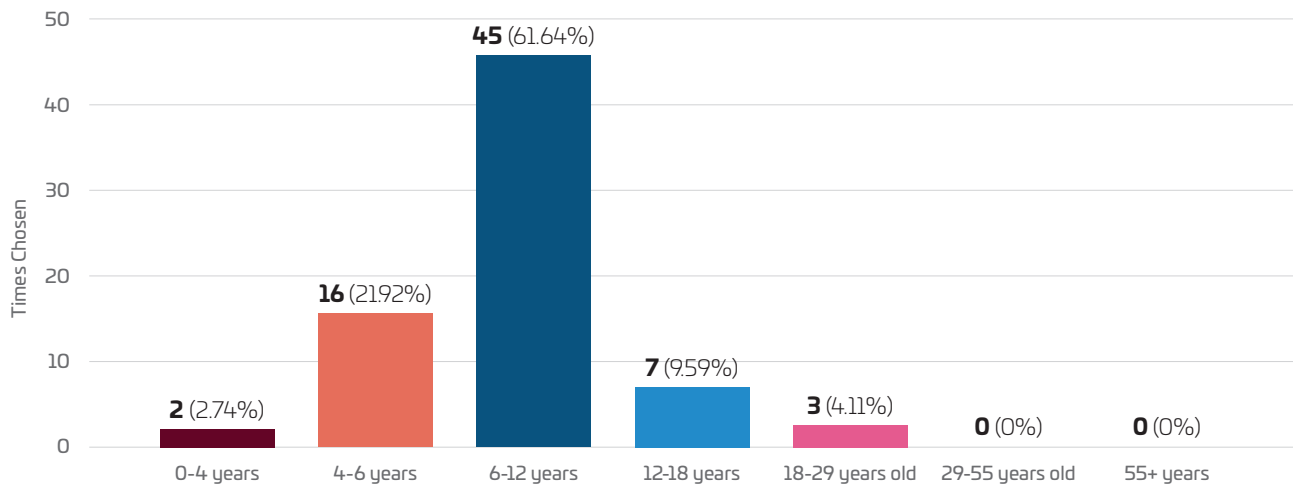


Figure 11. What is the main target group you work with in Bulgaria?

Croatia:

The responses from Croatian swimming professionals provide insights into their primary target groups as well:

- 0-4 years: Croatian respondents did not mention targeting this age group, indicating that they might not focus on introducing infants and toddlers to water;
- 4-6 years: 13.33% of Croatian respondents stated their main focus on pre-schoolers and children aged 4 to 6 years. This suggests a smaller emphasis on early childhood water activities compared to their Bulgarian counterparts;
- 6-12 years: The majority, 73.33%, of Croatian respondents indicated that their main target group falls within the age range of 6 to 12 years. This aligns with a widespread focus on teaching foundational swimming techniques and water safety to children;
- 12-18 years: 6.67% of Croatian respondents mentioned targeting adolescents aged 12 to 18 years old, similar to their Bulgarian counterparts;
- 18-29 years old: 4.44% of Croatian respondents specified young adults aged 18 to 29 years old as their main target group, again in alignment with the Bulgarian responses;
- 29-55 years old: A single 2.22% of Croatian respondents indicated targeting adults aged 29 to 55 years old, suggesting a small portion who may offer programs for adults;
- 55+ years: None of the Croatian respondents indicated targeting individuals aged 55 and above, similar to the Bulgarian trend. (Figure 12)

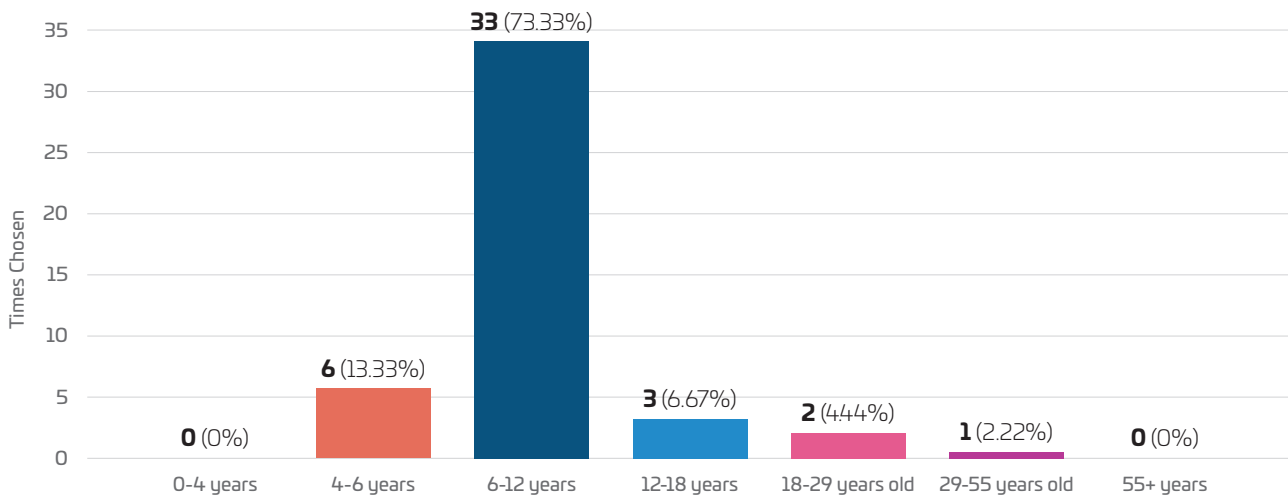


Figure 12. What is the main target group you work with in Croatia?

The analysis of main target group data showcases similarities and differences between Bulgarian and Croatian swimming professionals’ focuses. While both primarily target children in the 6-12 age range, Bulgarians place a slightly stronger emphasis on this group, while Croatians also allocate attention to young adults and a wider age range of children. The absence of targeting infants and seniors is consistent in both countries.

Question 7. Main water environment

The choice of the main water environment holds paramount importance in the realm of swimming training and coaching, exerting a profound influence on the entire learning experience. Whether opting for the embrace of natural water bodies or the controlled setting of artificial swimming pools, this decision carries significant implications that resonate throughout the journey of both coaches and learners. The dichotomy between these environments is underscored by a spectrum of factors that shape the effectiveness, safety, and overall quality of the training.

Primarily, the aspect of safety emerges as a critical concern, particularly for beginners and young learners. Artificial pools provide a haven of controlled conditions, minimizing the uncertainties associated with untamed natural water bodies. This sense of control extends to various dimensions, including water depth, temperature, and visibility, fostering an environment conducive to efficient learning. The convenience factor further underscores the importance of the main water environment. Swimming pools offer readily accessible spaces, equipped with facilities and amenities that streamline coaching practices and enhance the learning journey.

Yet, in the nuanced contrast between these two environments, lies the opportunity for skill development that ranges from fundamental to advanced. Natural water environments, with their dynamic currents and diverse textures, prompt swimmers to adapt and refine their techniques—a unique facet that enriches the training experience. Meanwhile, the psychological comfort that a controlled pool environment can offer is invaluable, particularly for those battling water-related anxieties. Confidence, a cornerstone of effective swimming instruction, thrives in the predictability of a well-maintained pool.

Diverse training goals also come into play when weighing the significance of the main water environment. Open water swimmers and triathletes often seek the challenges posed by natural water bodies to bolster their adaptability and fortitude. Such considerations are inextricably linked to personal preferences and cultural influences, as well as geographic availability. While open water may resonate with some, the accessibility and familiarity of a pool hold greater appeal for others.

In essence, the choice of the main water environment emerges as a pivotal determinant that shapes the entire landscape of swimming training. The optimal selection aligns not only with training objectives but also with the comfort, confidence, and aspirations of the learners and coaches alike. Both natural and artificial water environ-

ments offer their distinctive merits, converging to construct a comprehensive and enriching training journey that resonates on both technical and emotional levels.

Overall Analysis:

- Natural (sea, ocean, lake, river): The overall survey results show that 12.95% of respondents prefer natural water environments, such as the sea, ocean, lake, or river, for conducting their swimming training sessions. This suggests that a portion of swimming professionals value teaching in real-world water bodies;
- Artificial (swimming pools): The majority of respondents, 94.24%, indicated a preference for artificial water environments, namely swimming pools, for their training sessions. This highlights the convenience and controlled conditions that swimming pools offer, making them a preferred choice for many professionals.

In Figure 13, you could see in detail the answers of the respondents. (Fig. 13)

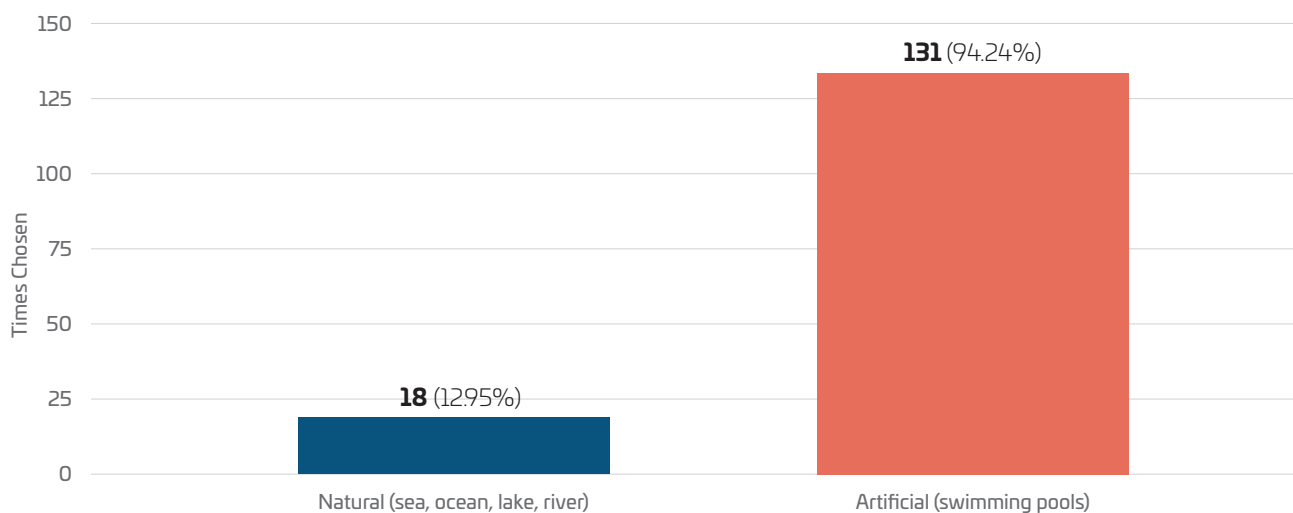


Figure 13. Main water environment





Bulgarian Analysis:

- Natural (sea, ocean, lake, river): In Bulgaria, 9.76% of respondents expressed a preference for natural water environments. This indicates that a smaller percentage of Bulgarian swimming professionals opt for real-world water bodies when conducting their training sessions;
- Artificial (swimming pools): The majority of Bulgarian respondents, 97.56%, favoured artificial water environments, predominantly swimming pools. This aligns with the overall trend of preferring controlled settings for teaching swimming. (Fig. 14)

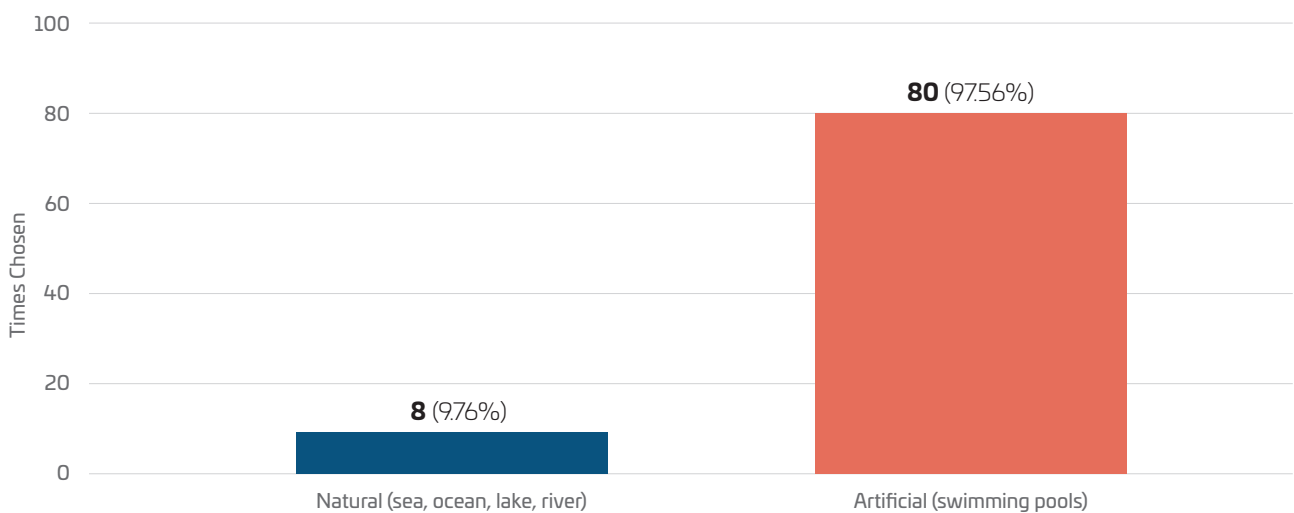


Figure 14. Main water environment in Bulgaria

Croatian Analysis:

- Natural (sea, ocean, lake, river): Among Croatian respondents, 16.36% indicated a preference for natural water environments. This is higher than the overall average, suggesting that a relatively larger portion of Croatian swimming professionals appreciate conducting sessions in natural water bodies;
- Artificial (swimming pools): The majority of Croatian respondents, 89.09%, favoured artificial water environments like swimming pools. While still the preferred choice, this percentage is slightly lower than the overall trend, reflecting a greater preference for natural water environments among Croatian professionals compared to the average. (Fig. 15)

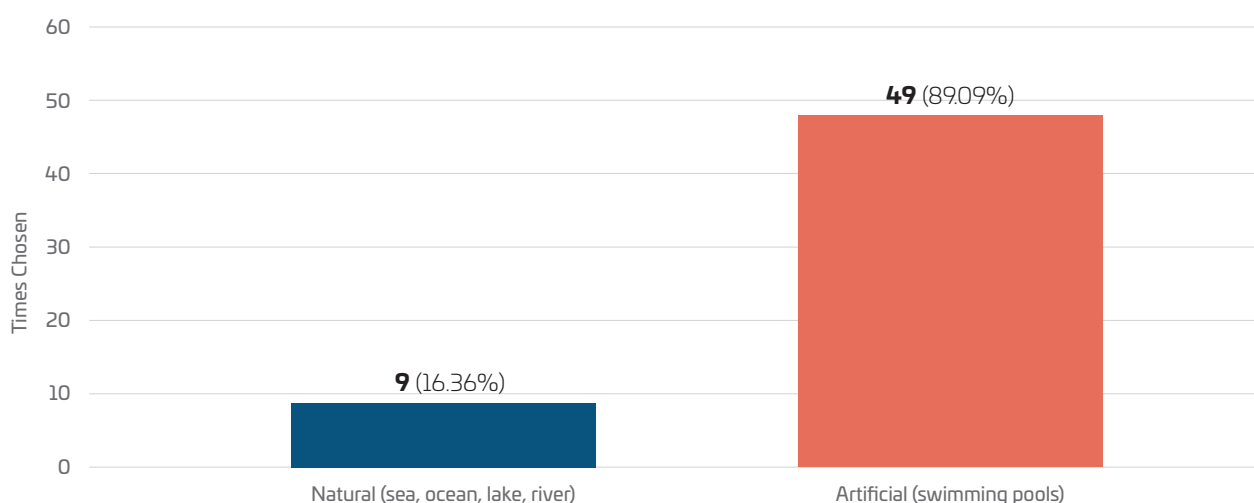


Figure 15. Main water environment in Croatia

The analysis of main water environment data demonstrates that while the vast majority of swimming professionals prefer artificial environments like swimming pools, a notable portion also appreciate and utilize natural water bodies for their training sessions. This preference might be influenced by factors such as accessibility, safety, and the specific needs of the trainees. Both Bulgaria and Croatia reflect this trend, but Croatian respondents show a relatively stronger inclination toward natural water environments compared to the overall average.

Question 8. Are you familiar with the term hydrophobia?

The project team asked the respondents are they are familiar with the term “hydrophobia”. This question is important because it ensures that participants understand the terminology used in the survey. This clarity is essential for accurate responses and meaningful insights into overcoming the fear of water. It helps tailor communication and maintains the validity of research by confirming that respondents are responding to the intended concept. Additionally, it considers potential cultural differences in interpretation and enhances the overall quality of collected data for more informed conclusions.

The analysis of respondents’ familiarity with the term “hydrophobia” provides valuable insights into the understanding of this specific concept across the surveyed group. In the overall dataset, an overwhelming majority of respondents, accounting for 89.05%, indicated that they are familiar with the term “hydrophobia.” This high level of familiarity suggests that the term is widely recognized within the surveyed population. (Fig.16)

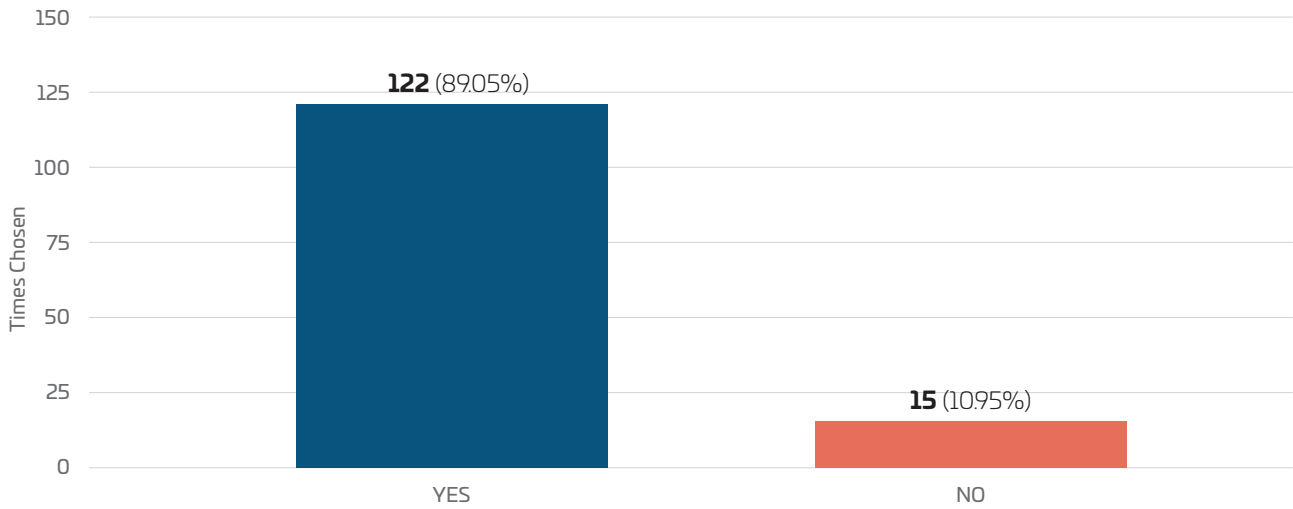


Figure 16. Are you familiar with the term hydrophobia?

Breaking down the data by country, among Bulgarian respondents, 88.75% indicated that they are familiar with “hydrophobia,” while the remaining 11.25% responded in the negative. This indicates a relatively high level of awareness among Bulgarian participants regarding the term. (Fig. 17)

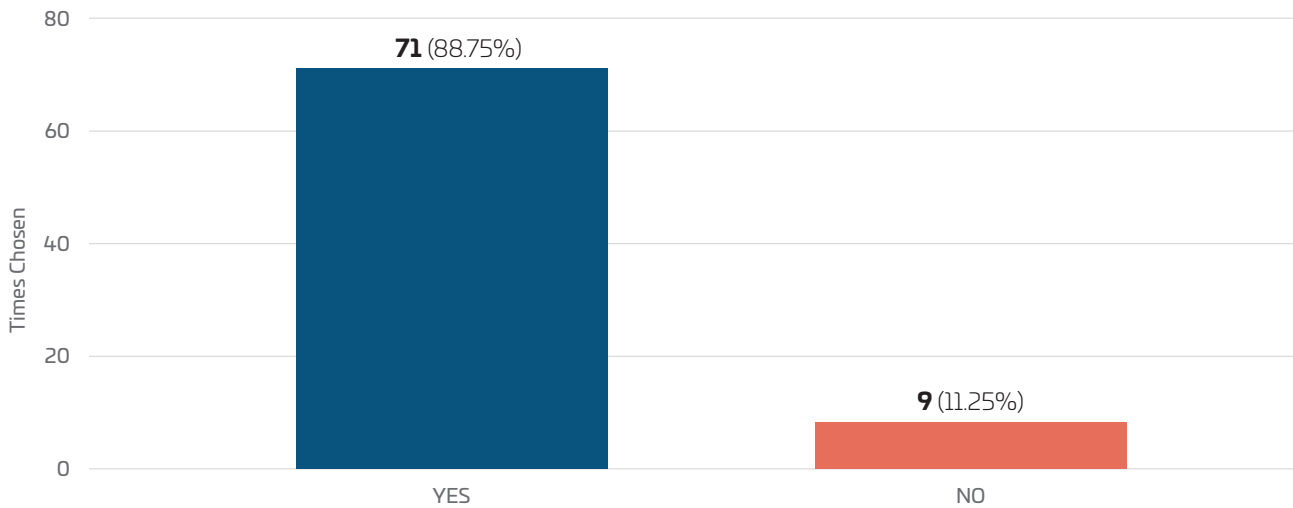


Figure 17. Are you familiar with the term hydrophobia (Bulgarian respondents)?

Similarly, in the Croatian subset of respondents, 89.09% expressed familiarity with “hydrophobia,” and 10.91% reported not being familiar with the term. This suggests a consistent pattern of recognition across both countries surveyed. (Fig. 18)

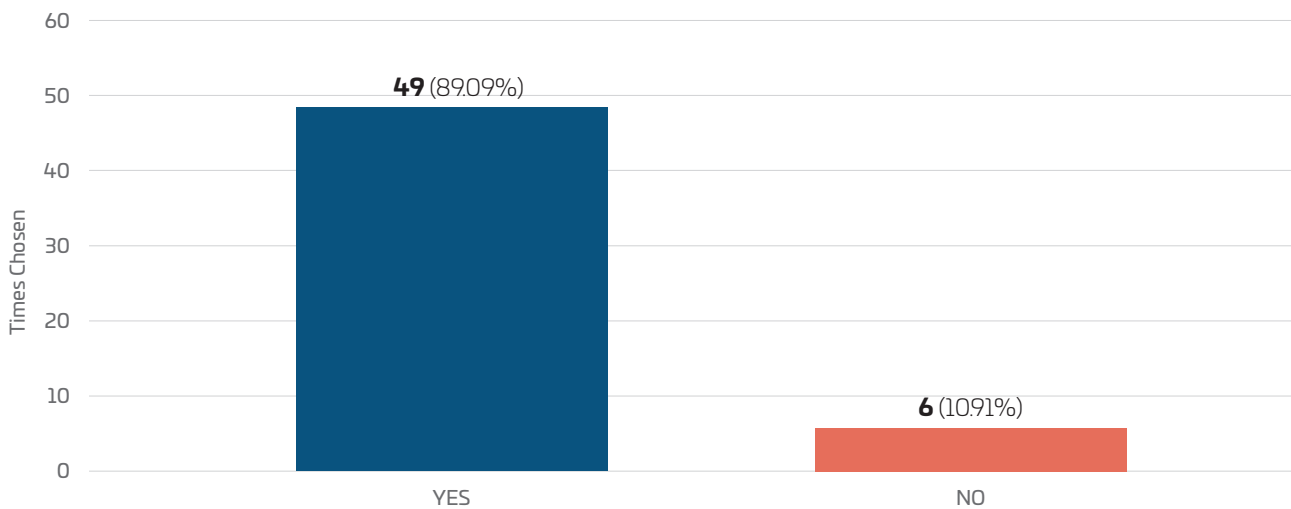


Figure 18. Are you familiar with the term hydrophobia (Croatian respondents)?

The results underscore the generally well-established understanding of “hydrophobia” among respondents from both Bulgaria and Croatia. This strong familiarity is a positive indicator for the survey’s effectiveness, ensuring that participants can accurately respond to questions related to overcoming the fear of water, which is the central theme of the survey.

Question 9. Have you had any personal experience with hydrophobia (with kids you are working with)?

Asking respondents whether they have had any personal experience with hydrophobia (specifically related to the children they work with) is crucial for several reasons. This question helps gather first-hand insights from individuals who have direct involvement in the field of swimming and water-related activities. Their experiences provide valuable context and anecdotes that can enrich the survey’s findings. It allows respondents to share practical knowledge, strategies, and success stories related to overcoming hydrophobia in children. This information can contribute to a more comprehensive analysis of effective approaches and techniques used by professionals to address and mitigate hydrophobia. Including this question enhances the survey’s credibility, as it captures real-world experiences that can provide valuable guidance for others in the field and help inform best practices.

The analysis of respondents’ personal experience with hydrophobia in the context of the children they work with provides valuable insights into the practical involvement of professionals in overcoming water-related fears.

In the overall dataset, 52.85% of respondents answered affirmatively, indicating that they have had personal experience with hydrophobia in the children they work with. This indicates that a significant portion of the surveyed group has encountered this specific fear in their professional roles. (Fig. 19)

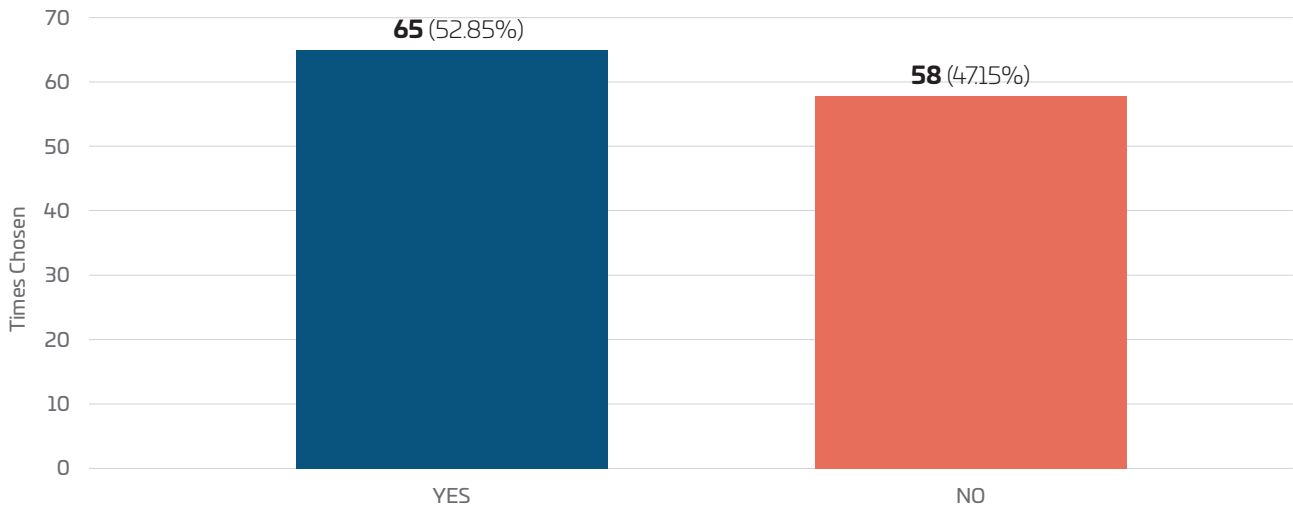


Figure 19. Have you had any personal experience with hydrophobia?

Breaking down the data by country, among Bulgarian respondents, a notably high percentage of 75% indicated that they have had personal experience with hydrophobia in the children they work with, while the remaining 25% responded in the negative. This suggests that a substantial majority of Bulgarian professionals have encountered hydrophobia in their work. (Fig. 20)

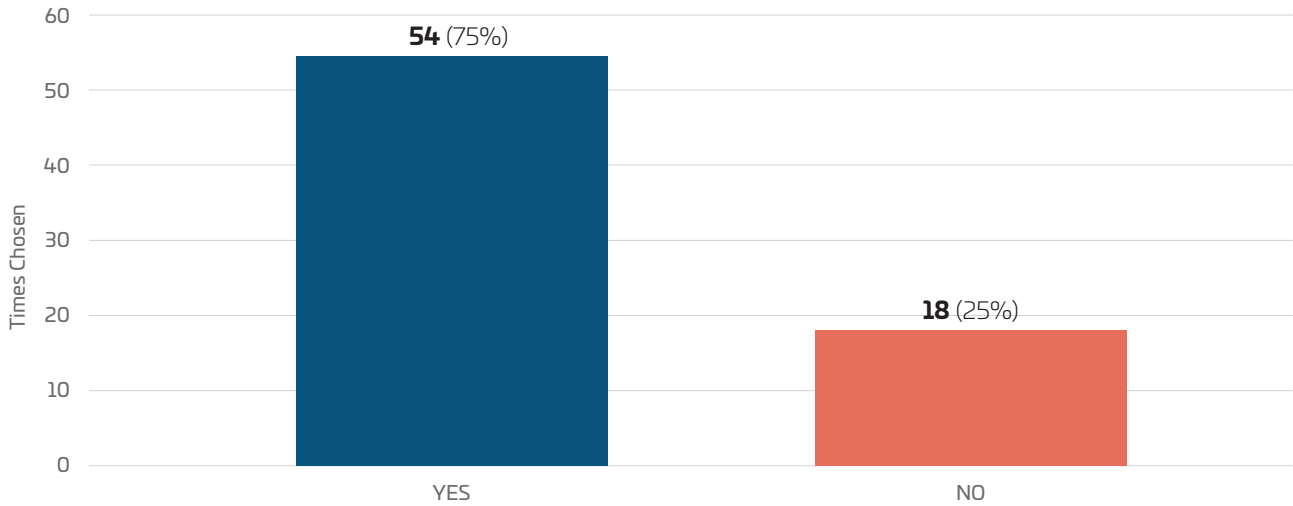


Figure 20. Have you had any personal experience with hydrophobia (Bulgarian respondents)?

Conversely, in the Croatian subset of respondents, 22.45% reported having personal experience with hydrophobia among the children they work with, while 77.55% answered in the negative. This indicates a relatively lower proportion of Croatian professionals who have encountered this fear in their work.

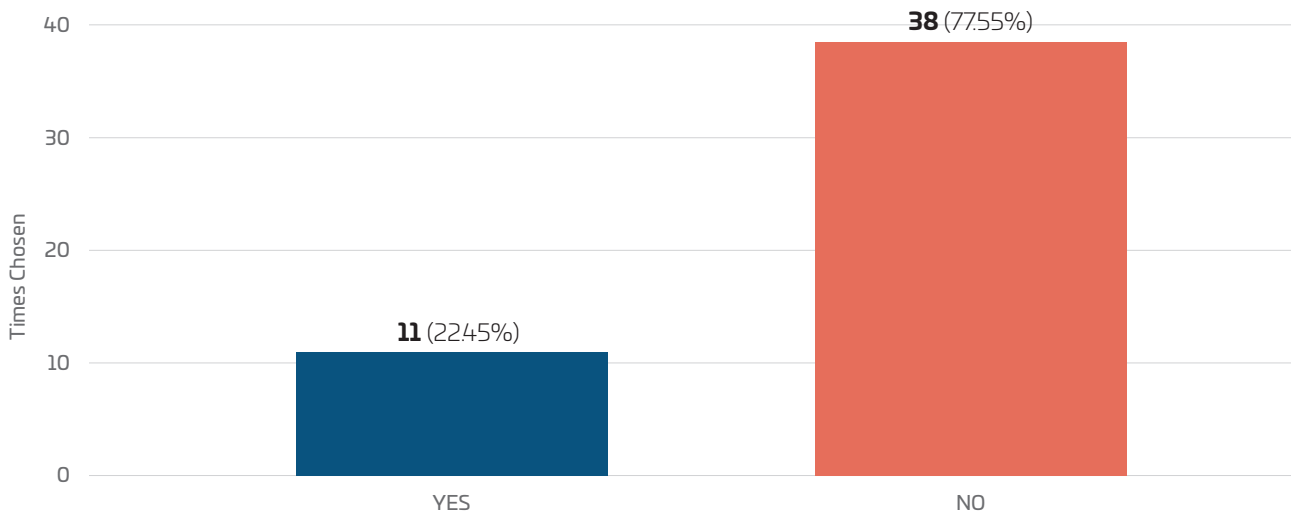


Figure 21. Have you had any personal experience with hydrophobia (Croatian respondents)?

The results reveal that a considerable number of professionals across both countries have interacted with children facing hydrophobia. The higher percentage of Bulgarian respondents with such experience suggests a more prevalent issue within their working context. Conversely, the lower percentage among Croatian respondents could indicate either a less common occurrence or potential variations in the approach to addressing hydrophobia.

This information provides a nuanced understanding of the practical exposure professionals have to hydrophobia and emphasizes the importance of their insights in shaping effective strategies for overcoming this fear among children in aquatic environments.

Question 10. Have you managed to overcome it (the phobia)?

The analysis of respondents who have had personal experience with hydrophobia in the children they work with and managed to overcome it provides a deep understanding of the effectiveness of their efforts and the potential strategies employed. In the overall dataset, an impressive 73 respondents, or 93.59%, indicated that they have successfully managed to overcome hydrophobia in the children they work with. This signifies a high level of success and expertise in dealing with this fear across the surveyed group. (Fig. 22)

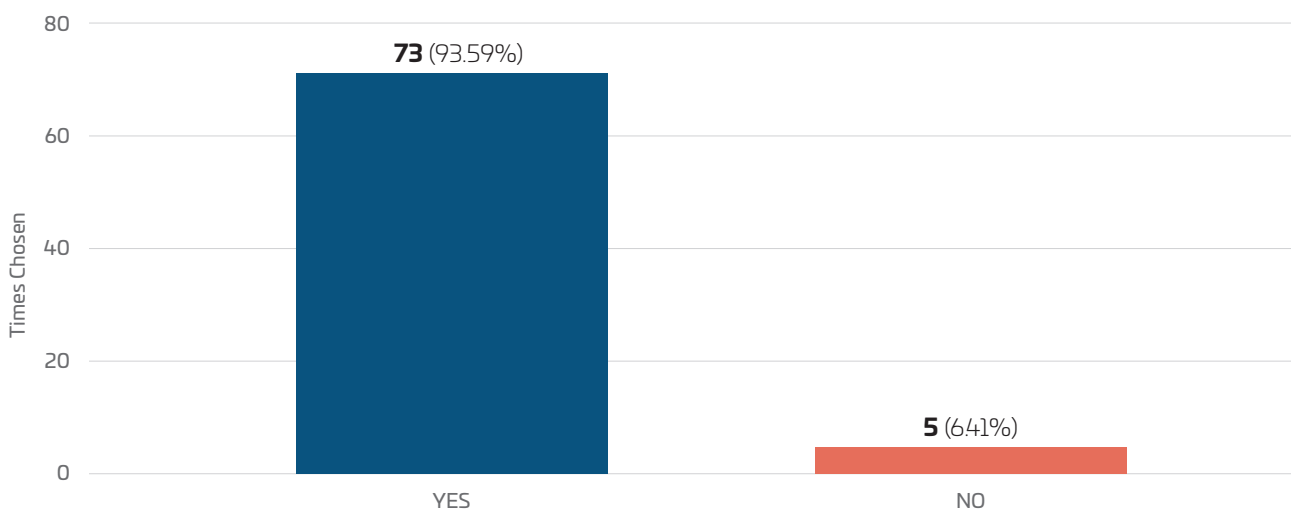


Figure 22. Have you managed to overcome it (the phobia)?



Examining the data on a country level, among Bulgarian respondents, a significant majority of 92.86% reported that they have successfully overcome hydrophobia in the children they work with. This demonstrates a commendable success rate within the Bulgarian context and showcases the effectiveness of their approaches and interventions. (Fig. 23)

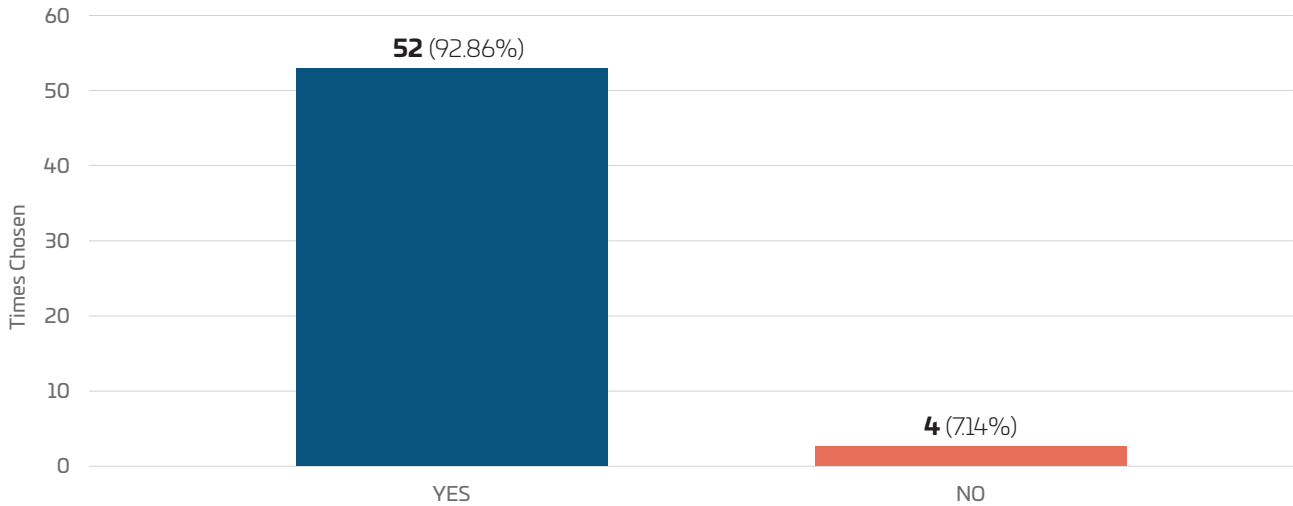


Figure 23. Have you managed to overcome it (Bulgarian respondents)?

Similarly, within the Croatian subset of respondents, 95.45% reported successful instances of overcoming hydrophobia among the children they work with. This high percentage reflects the efficacy of their strategies and the dedication of Croatian professionals to addressing this fear. (Fig. 24)

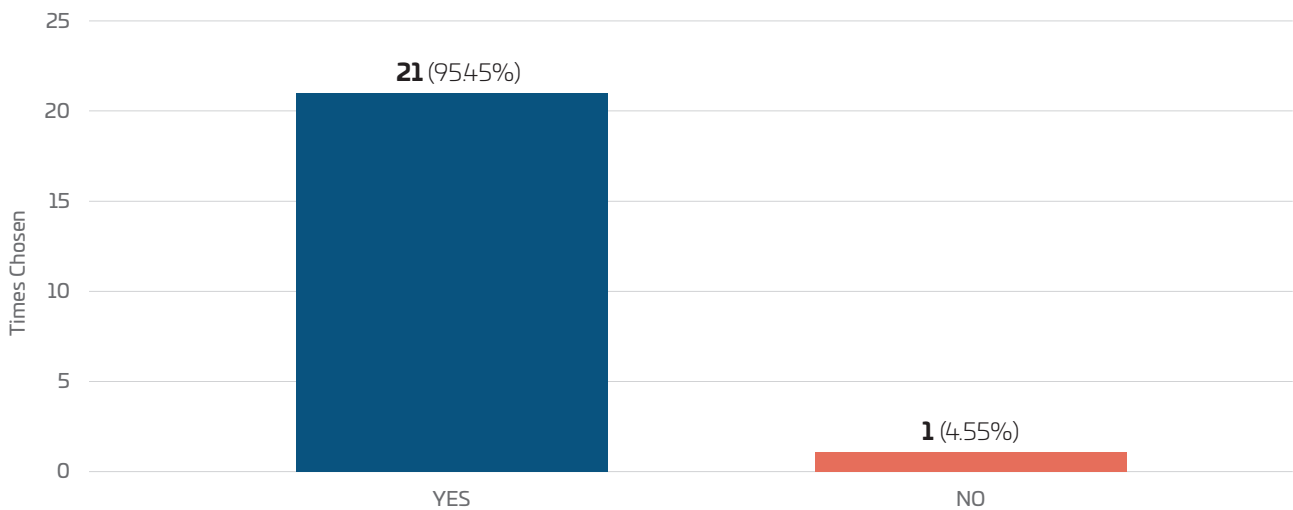


Figure 24. Have you managed to overcome it (Croatian respondents)?

The results collectively highlight the expertise and competence of swimming professionals in both countries when it comes to managing and overcoming hydrophobia in children. The significantly high success rates in all categories indicate a shared commitment to creating a safe and comfortable environment for young swimmers to conquer their fears.

The insights gained from these statistics are invaluable for understanding the potential strategies, techniques, and approaches that have proven effective in helping children overcome hydrophobia. These professionals' experiences and successes serve as inspirations and guideposts for others in the field, illustrating the potential to create a positive and fear-free aquatic experience for children.

**Question 11. Please, share with us your approach to overcome the case of hydrophobia.**

The responses from professionals who have successfully managed to overcome hydrophobia in the children they work with highlight a diverse range of effective approaches and strategies. These insights offer valuable guidance for addressing this fear in young swimmers.

One prevalent approach is the gradual introduction to the water environment. This involves carefully easing the child into the pool, crouching to immerse their feet and shoulders, and allowing them to hold onto the instructor's shoulders while practicing leg movements. This gradual method not only familiarizes them with the water but also builds trust between the instructor and child.

The use of various props and aids is a common technique. Floats, belts, and backpacks provide a sense of security and enable children to feel safe enough to venture into the water. The visual progress of other children who have overcome their fear serves as motivation for hesitant swimmers.

Patience emerges as a crucial factor in the process. Professionals underscore the importance of spending time in the water, offering ample support and encouragement, and accommodating the child's pace of progress. Building trust in the coach-swimmer relationship plays a pivotal role, along with vivid demonstrations of tasks and maintaining a sense of unity among participants.

Games and playfulness are powerful tools in conquering hydrophobia. By transforming exercises into enjoyable games, instructors make the learning experience more engaging and less intimidating. Singing songs, using toys, and incorporating humour contribute to creating a positive and comfortable environment. Cognitive-behavioural therapy emerges as an effective psychological strategy. Gradually exposing children to water, showcasing its safety, and creating positive emotions help them confront their fears and realize that water is not a threat.

Individualized approaches are emphasized, taking into account each child's unique needs and comfort level. Techniques like visualization, real-life problem presentation, and personalization through body position demonstrations are essential components of this tailored approach.

Ultimately, these professionals' success stories highlight the significance of compassion, patience, and adaptability. Overcoming hydrophobia requires not only technical knowledge but also a deep understanding of children's fears and the ability to instil confidence, trust, and a sense of security in the water. (Fig. 25)



Interestingly, 11.4% of respondents indicated a lack of rationalization or awareness for the fear, suggesting that some children experience hydrophobia without an identifiable cause.

In conclusion, the respondents' insights illuminate the multifaceted nature of hydrophobia in children. These factors underscore the need for empathetic and gradual approaches to help children overcome their fear of water, addressing concerns, providing education, and creating positive experiences that transform water from a source of fear into a manageable and enjoyable element of life. (Fig. 26)

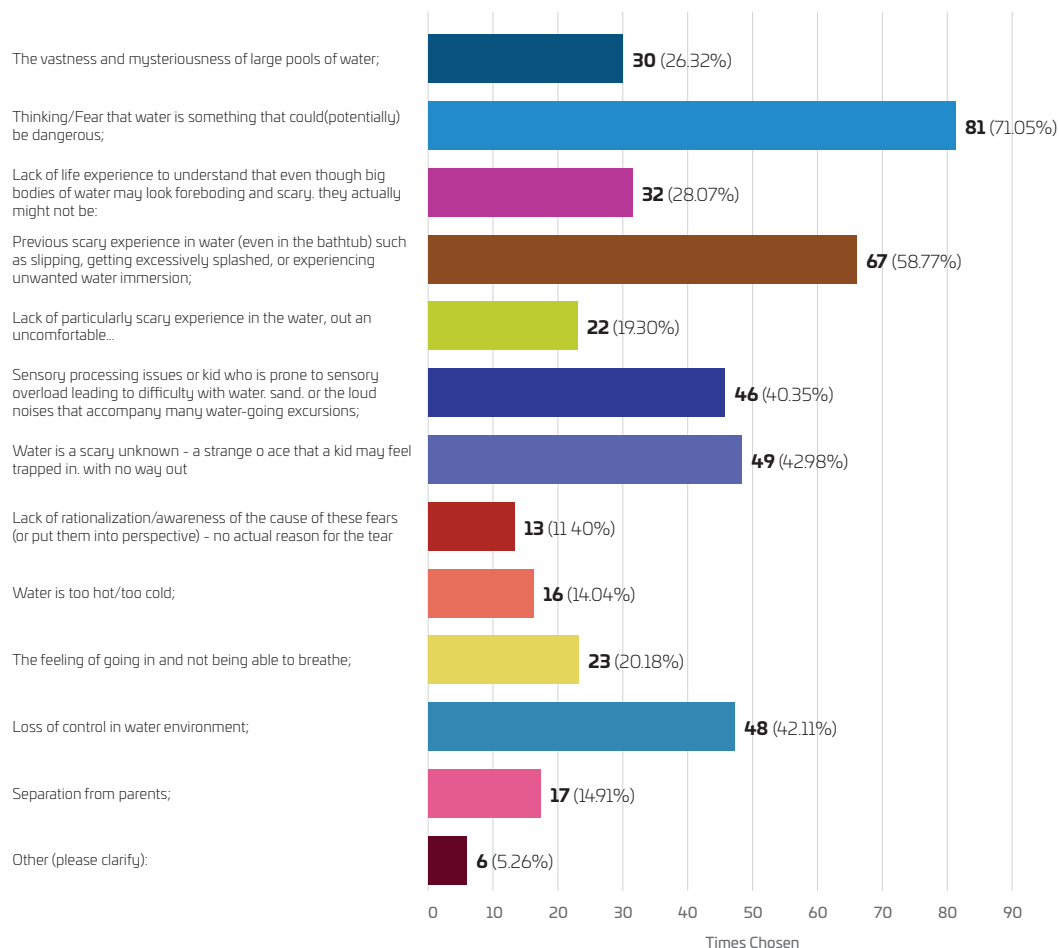


Figure 26. The main causes of hydrophobia

The analysis of the respondents' perceptions regarding the causes of hydrophobia offers valuable insights into the various factors influencing children's fear of water, as observed among Bulgarian and Croatian respondents.

Among Bulgarian respondents, the fear that water could potentially be dangerous emerged as a predominant factor, with a substantial 67.74% identifying it. This apprehension may stem from a lack of understanding and familiarity with water safety. Additionally, the feeling of water being a foreboding environment was acknowledged by 53.23% of respondents. This highlights the unsettling notion that water could become a confining space with no escape.

Previous negative experiences played a significant role in Bulgarian respondents' views, with 61.29% pointing out experiences like slipping, splashing, or unwanted water immersion as triggers for hydrophobia. Similarly, the fear of losing control in a water environment was recognized by 46.77% of respondents. This reflects a lack of confidence in navigating water spaces. Sensory processing issues were acknowledged by 12.9% of Bulgarian respondents, illustrating how sensory sensitivities can contribute to discomfort around water. The feeling of not being able to breathe underwater, which can intensify fear, was identified by 35.48% of respondents.



Regarding Croatian respondents, similar patterns emerged. The perception of water's potential danger was notably high, with 78% of respondents highlighting this fear. Previous negative experiences in water, even in seemingly harmless settings, impacted 56% of respondents, indicating that past incidents play a considerable role in shaping fear. Sensory processing issues were more pronounced among Croatian respondents, with 76% indicating that sensory overload and difficulties with water-related stimuli could contribute to hydrophobia. Interestingly, a notable percentage of both Bulgarian (19.35%) and Croatian (38%) respondents recognized a lack of rationalization or awareness as a cause of hydrophobia. This suggests that some children experience fear without a clear identifiable reason, highlighting the complex psychological nature of hydrophobia.

Both Bulgarian and Croatian respondents highlighted common themes contributing to hydrophobia, such as the perception of water's danger, negative experiences, and sensory sensitivities. These insights emphasize the importance of tailored approaches that address individual fears, provide education, and create positive experiences to help children overcome their fear of water.

Question 13. What in your perception might help to reduce hydrophobia?

The respondents' insights regarding methods to reduce hydrophobia highlight a range of strategies that can be employed to address this fear effectively. One-on-one swim lessons were highly regarded by respondents, with 58.88% endorsing their efficacy. Individualized attention from a skilled instructor can provide personalized guidance and support, enabling children to progress at their own pace while feeling safe and secure. This approach allows instructors to tailor their methods to each child's unique needs, building confidence step by step. Among these strategies, gradual immersion emerged as a prominent approach, with 57.94% of respondents recognizing its value. This method involves introducing children to water environments slowly, allowing them to become comfortable at their own pace. Gradual immersion can help build trust and familiarity, gradually diminishing the fear associated with water.

Communication was identified as a powerful tool to reduce hydrophobia, as indicated by 52.34% of respondents who suggested the "Talk It Out" approach. Engaging in open conversations about the fear, its causes, and the safety of water environments can help children understand and rationalize their feelings. Such discussions promote a sense of control and empowerment, gradually reducing anxiety.

Furthermore, seeking counselling, whether from a swimming expert or a psychological support professional, was recognized by 46.73% of respondents as a valuable strategy. Expert guidance can provide children with specialized techniques to manage fear, while psychological support can address underlying anxieties contributing to hydrophobia.

Fun equipment was also identified as a key tool in reducing hydrophobia, with 45.79% of respondents advocating for its use. Fun equipment, such as colourful floats or engaging water toys, not only distract children from their fear but also create positive associations with water. These tools transform water activities into enjoyable experiences, aiding in the gradual normalization of aquatic environments.

An approach that resonated with 36.45% of respondents was the "Get in With Them" method. This technique involves adults or instructors entering the water alongside fearful children. This presence can offer reassurance, comfort, and a sense of security, encouraging children to explore water environments with greater ease.

The "Other" category offers the potential for diverse insights, but the specific strategies are not mentioned in the provided data. However, it's evident that respondents recognize the multifaceted nature of overcoming hydrophobia, and these strategies collectively offer a comprehensive toolkit for addressing and alleviating this fear.

In conclusion, the respondents' suggestions for reducing hydrophobia encompass a wide range of approaches, all with the shared aim of creating positive associations with water, fostering confidence, and gradually diminishing the fear associated with aquatic environments. These strategies underline the importance of understanding individual needs and tailoring interventions accordingly to help children overcome their hydrophobia effectively. (Fig.27)

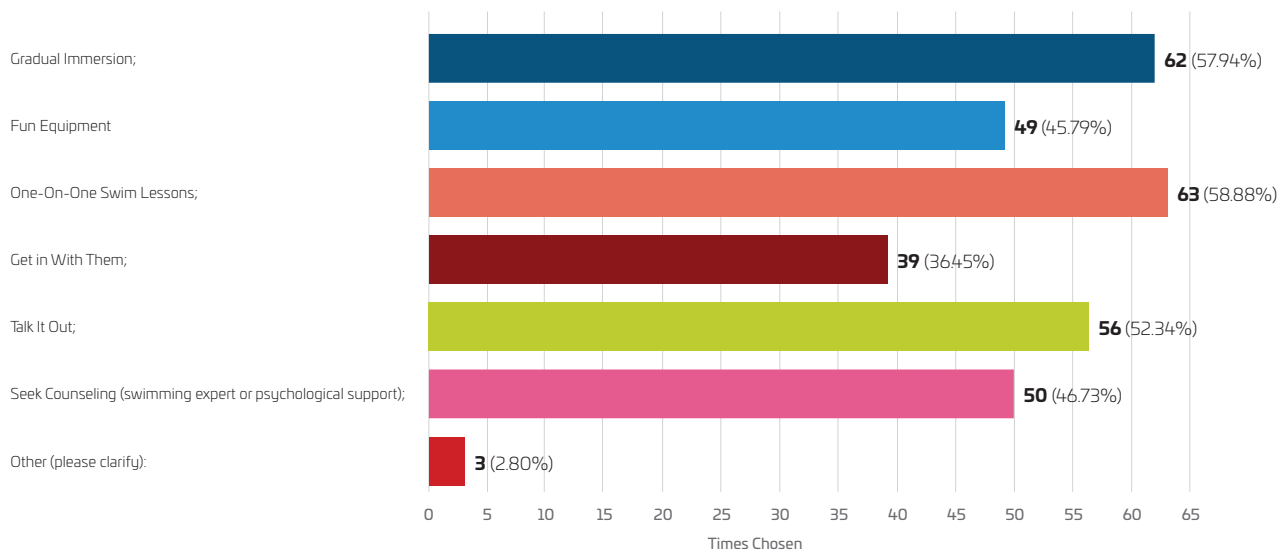


Figure 27. What in your perception might help to reduce hydrophobia?

The perceptions of respondents from Bulgaria and Croatia shed light on their viewpoints regarding effective strategies to mitigate hydrophobia. These insights offer valuable perspectives on the approaches that are most likely to help children overcome their fear of water.

Bulgarian respondents:

- Among the Bulgarian respondents, the “Gradual Immersion” approach was widely acknowledged, with a significant 73.21% advocating its effectiveness. This approach involves a step-by-step introduction to water, allowing children to become accustomed to aquatic environments at their own pace. The popularity of this method emphasizes the importance of building trust and reducing fear through gradual exposure;
- Additionally, 39.29% of Bulgarian respondents saw potential in “Fun Equipment” as a means to alleviate hydrophobia. The incorporation of engaging water toys or buoyant devices can transform water activities into enjoyable and engaging experiences. This approach creates positive associations with water and makes the learning process more enjoyable for children;
- “One-On-One Swim Lessons” received a high endorsement among Bulgarian respondents, with 69.64% recognizing its value. This approach allows for personalized attention and guidance tailored to individual needs. By receiving dedicated instruction, children can progress comfortably while building their confidence in the water;
- “Get in With Them” was embraced by 57.14% of Bulgarian respondents as an effective way to reduce hydrophobia. This approach involves adults or instructors entering the water alongside children, offering reassurance and a sense of security. This companionship can alleviate fear and encourage children to explore water environments more willingly;
- A significant portion, 62.5%, highlighted the importance of the “Talk It Out” approach in Bulgaria. Engaging in open discussions about fears, causes, and safety surrounding water can help children rationalize their feelings and gradually reduce anxiety. Clear communication empowers children to understand and manage their fears effectively;
- Furthermore, 39.29% of Bulgarian respondents recognized the potential of “Seeking Counselling” from swimming experts or psychological professionals. This approach underscores the value of expert guidance and emotional support in helping children address and overcome their hydrophobia.



Croatian respondents:

- In Croatia, a similar pattern emerged, with 42.86% of respondents favouring “Gradual Immersion.” This emphasizes the universality of the approach’s effectiveness in gradually introducing children to water environments;
- “Fun Equipment” garnered strong support from Croatian respondents, with 53.06% endorsing its value. Like in Bulgaria, this approach offers a playful and engaging method to counteract hydrophobia by creating enjoyable water experiences;
- The endorsement of “One-On-One Swim Lessons” by 46.94% of Croatian respondents underscores the personalized attention necessary for effective hydrophobia reduction. This approach’s popularity reinforces the importance of tailored guidance and support;
- “Get in With Them” and “Talk It Out” were valued by 14.29% and 42.86% of Croatian respondents, respectively, reflecting the recognition of companionship and communication as pivotal strategies;
- “Seek Counselling” received notable endorsement from 55.1% of Croatian respondents, reinforcing the significance of expert assistance and psychological support.

In both countries, the strong recognition of these approaches underscores their potential to effectively address hydrophobia and create positive experiences for children in aquatic environments. These strategies collectively offer a comprehensive toolkit for parents, instructors, and professionals to help children overcome their fear and build water confidence.

Question 14. How important do you find kids’ hydrophobia?

The perception of kids’ hydrophobia, as revealed by the survey, holds significant importance across all respondents, although there are noteworthy similarities, differences, and conclusions to draw from their answers. The overall mean score of 52.72 indicates that, on average, respondents consider kids’ hydrophobia to be moderately important. This suggests that a substantial portion of respondents recognize the significance of addressing this issue, likely due to the implications it has on children’s safety, well-being, and their ability to enjoy water-related activities. (Fig. 28)

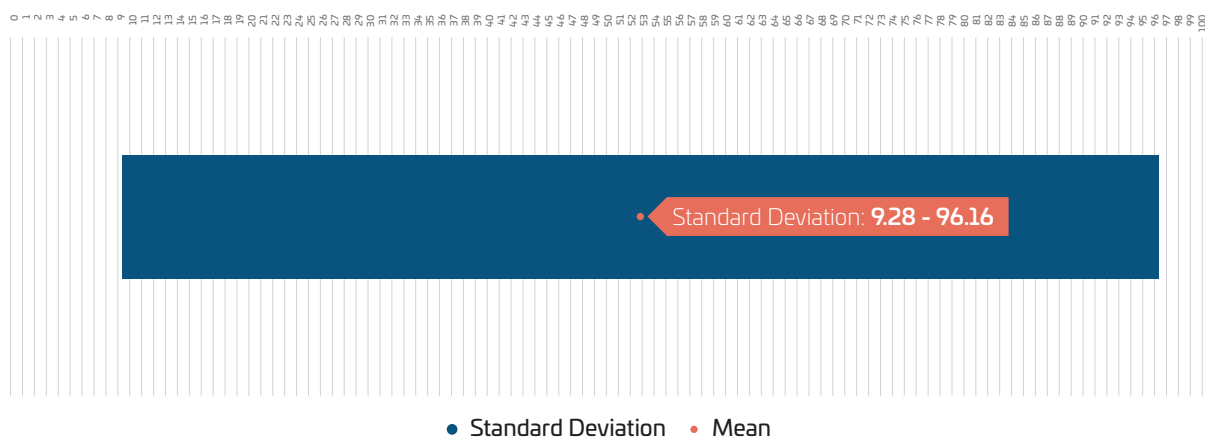


Figure 28. How important do you find kids’ hydrophobia?

Bulgarian respondents, with a mean score of 77.26, expressed a notably higher level of importance placed on kids’ hydrophobia. This indicates a strong collective recognition of the issue’s gravity among this group. The relatively high standard deviation of 47-100 highlights the diversity of opinions within this group, potentially reflecting varying degrees of personal or professional experiences with hydrophobic children. (Fig. 29)

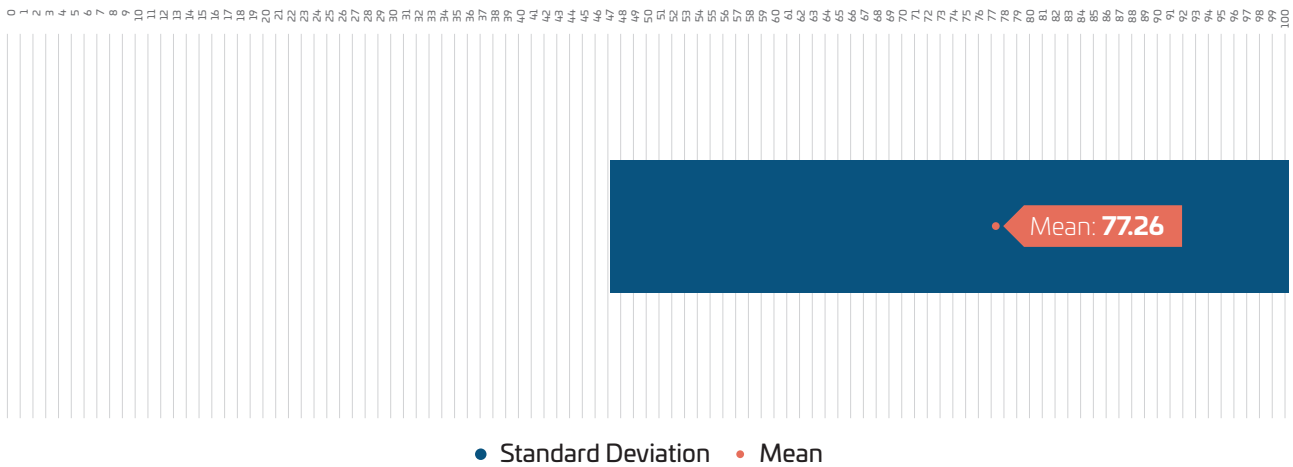


Figure 29. How important do you find kids’ hydrophobia (Bulgarian respondents)?

On the other hand, Croatian respondents demonstrated a lower mean score of 26, suggesting a comparatively lower perceived importance of kids’ hydrophobia. The narrower standard deviation range of 13.83–65.83 indicates a more consistent level of opinion among these respondents. The relatively lower mean score might imply that, on average, hydrophobia is perceived as less concerning in this demographic, though individual viewpoints might still vary. (Fig. 30)

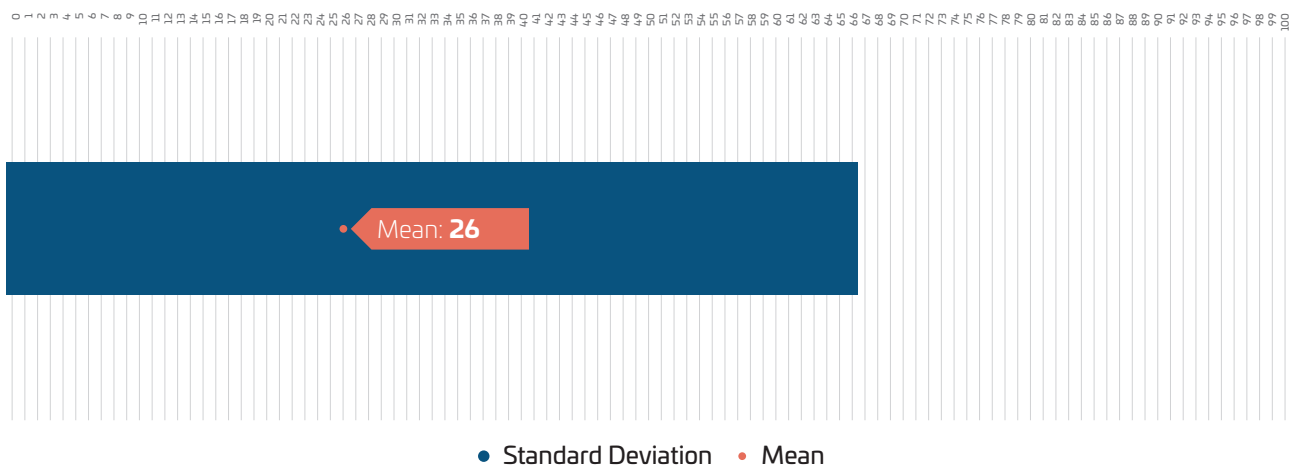


Figure 30. How important do you find kids’ hydrophobia (Croatian respondents)?

The differences in mean scores between Bulgarian and Croatian respondents can be attributed to various factors, including cultural attitudes, experiences with water-related activities, and the prevalence of hydrophobia among children in these regions. The relatively high importance attributed by Bulgarian respondents might be a reflection of the country’s proximity to the Black Sea and a higher frequency of water-related activities.

The analyse of this question demonstrates that kids’ hydrophobia is viewed as an important issue by respondents, but with varying degrees of emphasis. While the overall mean score falls in the moderate range, the divergent mean scores between Bulgarian and Croatian respondents indicate distinct perceptions of the issue’s importance in these regions. These findings underscore the need for tailored approaches to address hydrophobia based on regional perspectives and experiences, while also emphasizing the collective importance of ensuring children’s comfort and safety in water environments.



Question 15. What kind of help would you look for if you notice your swimmer has hydrophobia?

The respondents’ preferences for seeking help if they notice a swimmer with hydrophobia vary across different categories and regions, reflecting diverse perspectives and approaches. On a general level, the survey unveils three primary avenues for seeking help: Children’s psychologists, Swimming experts, and a willingness to solve the issue independently.

- **Self-Solving Approach:** A significant majority, with 73.79%, claimed that they would attempt to solve the issue themselves. This response might stem from the respondents’ confidence in their ability to understand and manage the hydrophobia within their swimmer, or it could reflect the belief that hydrophobia can be overcome through gradual exposure and familiarization;
- **Swimming Experts:** A larger portion of respondents, with 66.02%, expressed the intent to consult swimming experts in cases of hydrophobia. This signifies the role that professionals with specific knowledge of swimming techniques and instruction can play in addressing and alleviating hydrophobia;
- **Children’s Psychologists:** Overall, 52.43% of respondents expressed the inclination to consult children’s psychologists if they observed a swimmer with hydrophobia. This indicates a recognition of the potential psychological underpinnings of hydrophobia and the importance of addressing those aspects to help swimmers overcome their fears. (Fig. 31)

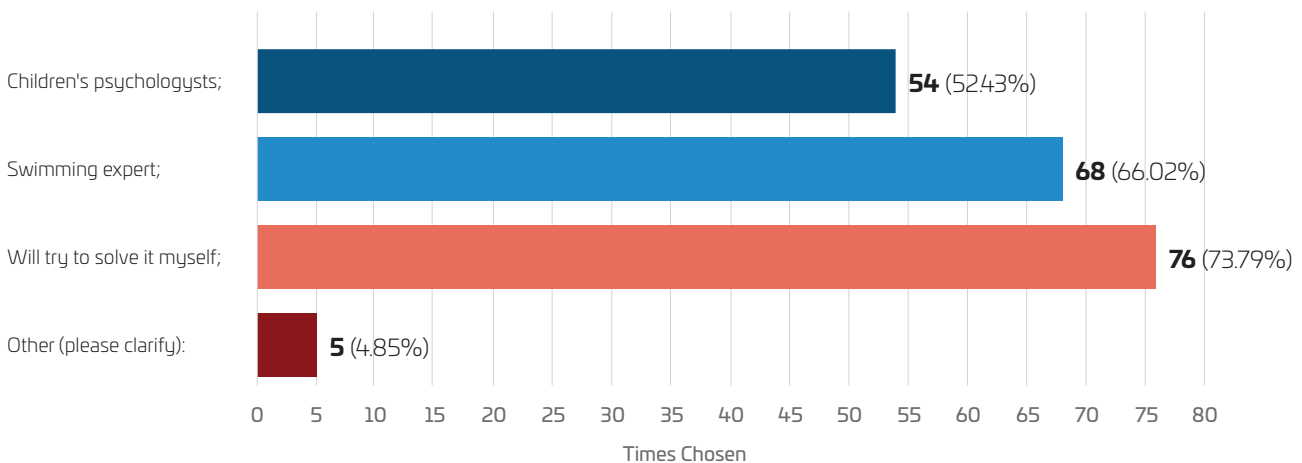


Figure 31. What kind of help would you look for if you notice your swimmer has hydrophobia?

Regional Differences - Bulgaria:

In Bulgaria, the respondents’ preference for seeking help from children’s psychologists stands at 21.15%. This percentage suggests a somewhat lower inclination compared to the overall respondents. The preference for consulting swimming experts is also slightly lower at 42.31%, while the self-solving approach remains relatively high at 67.31%.

Regional Differences - Croatia:

Croatian respondents show a strong inclination towards seeking help from children’s psychologists, with a substantial 85.71%. The preference for consulting swimming experts is even higher at 93.88%. The self-solving approach, at 81.63%, is also significant but slightly lower than the overall respondents.

There are 5 “Other” responses provided by the survey participants in regard to seeking help if they notice a swimmer with hydrophobia highlight a range of insightful and innovative approaches. These responses underscore the depth and complexity of the issue, as well as the multifaceted nature of addressing hydrophobia effectively.



1. Explaining the Task to the Child: One respondent emphasized the importance of clear communication with the child. By explaining the task in an understandable manner, the child gains confidence, suggesting that effective communication can play a pivotal role in overcoming hydrophobia;
2. Involving Parents and Clarifying Traumatic Experiences: Another respondent suggested involving parents in the process. This approach recognizes the influence of previous traumatic experiences on a child's fear of water. By having a conversation with parents, any potential triggers or past experiences can be identified, contributing to a more comprehensive and tailored approach to addressing the hydrophobia;
3. Child Therapist: The mention of a child therapist highlights the significance of involving professionals specifically trained in child psychology. This approach indicates an awareness of the need for specialized psychological support in helping children overcome their hydrophobia;
4. Combined Expertise: Respondents who possess a dual role as both a swimming coach and a holder of a psychology master's degree exemplify a unique combination of skills. This underscores the value of interdisciplinary knowledge and expertise in addressing the psychological aspects of hydrophobia;
5. Parental Conversations: Another respondent also suggested engaging in conversations with parents. This approach reflects the importance of collaboration with parents to understand the child's history, fears, and potential triggers.

These responses collectively highlight the importance of individualized and holistic approaches to addressing hydrophobia. By recognizing the psychological and emotional factors involved, these responses underscore the need for collaboration among professionals, parents, and swimmers themselves. This insight reinforces the idea that overcoming hydrophobia is a multifaceted process that requires tailored strategies and a comprehensive understanding of each swimmer's unique circumstances. The varied responses underline the complexity of addressing hydrophobia, with psychological, instructional, and individual factors influencing the preferred help-seeking strategies. It's important to note that each case of hydrophobia may require a unique approach, and a combination of professionals, instructors, and self-help techniques might offer the most effective way to help swimmers overcome their fears and build water confidence.

Question 16. How important is the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia for you as a swimming expert?

The responses gathered from the survey participants regarding the importance of the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia offer valuable insights into the perception of this issue across different groups. The variations in their answers provide a nuanced understanding of how this topic is viewed, both in a general context and within specific regions. The overall mean importance score for the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia is calculated at 55.63, with a standard deviation ranging from 11.28 to 9998. This indicates that there is a notable variance in the respondents' views, as reflected by the wide standard deviation. (Fig.32)

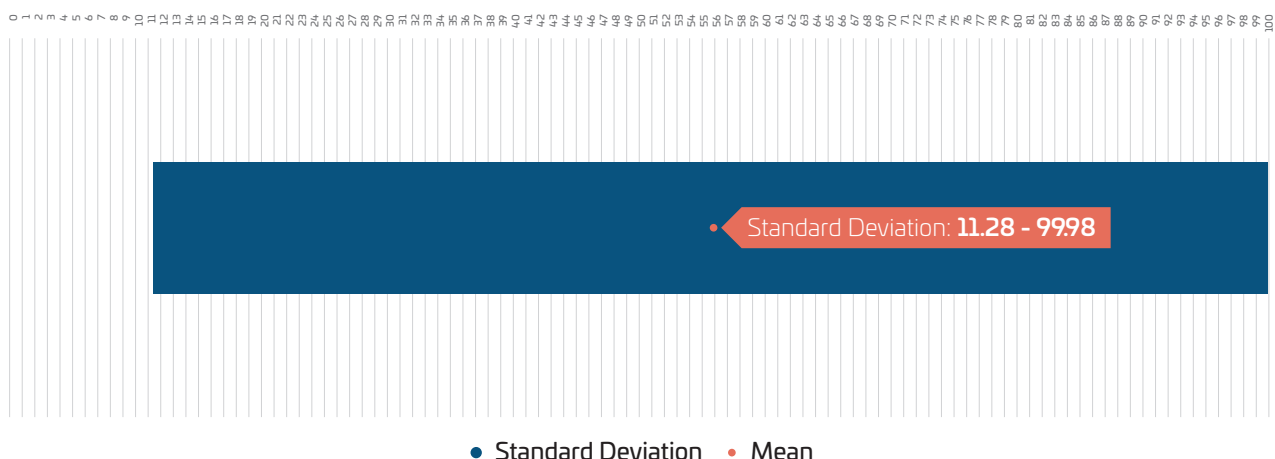


Figure 32. How important is the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia for you as a swimming expert?



Bulgarian respondents expressed a particularly high level of importance assigned to this topic, with a mean score of 85.49 and a standard deviation ranging from 61.70 to 100. This suggests that the issue of overcoming kids' hydrophobia is considered significantly important by respondents in Bulgaria. (Fig.33)

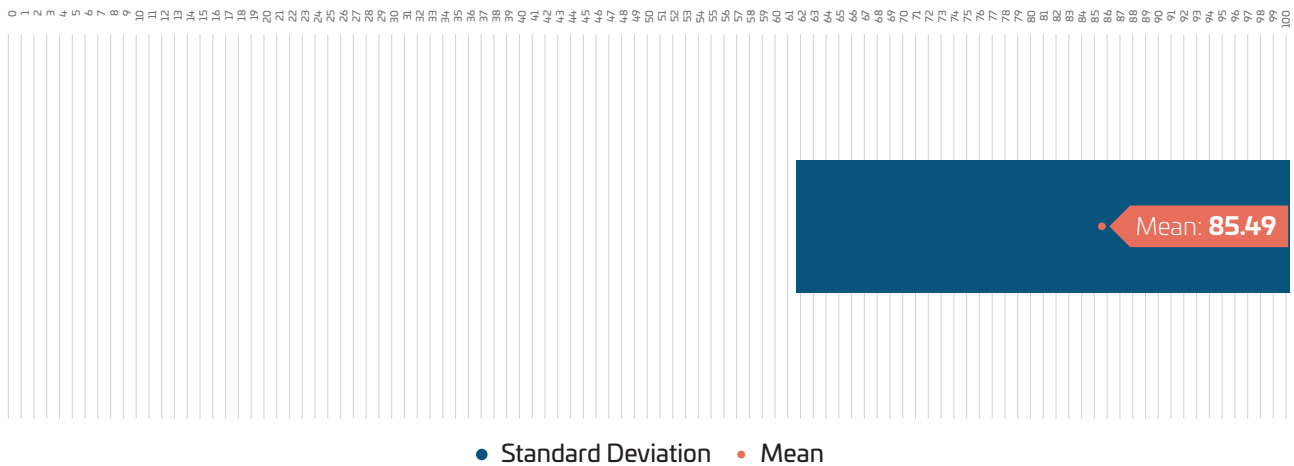


Figure 33. How important is the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia for you as a swimming expert in Bulgaria?

On the other hand, Croatian respondents provided a lower mean score of 24.9, accompanied by a standard deviation spanning from 14.49 to 64.29. This indicates a wider range of opinions among Croatian respondents, with some viewing the topic with relatively higher importance and others assigning a lower level of significance. (Fig.34)

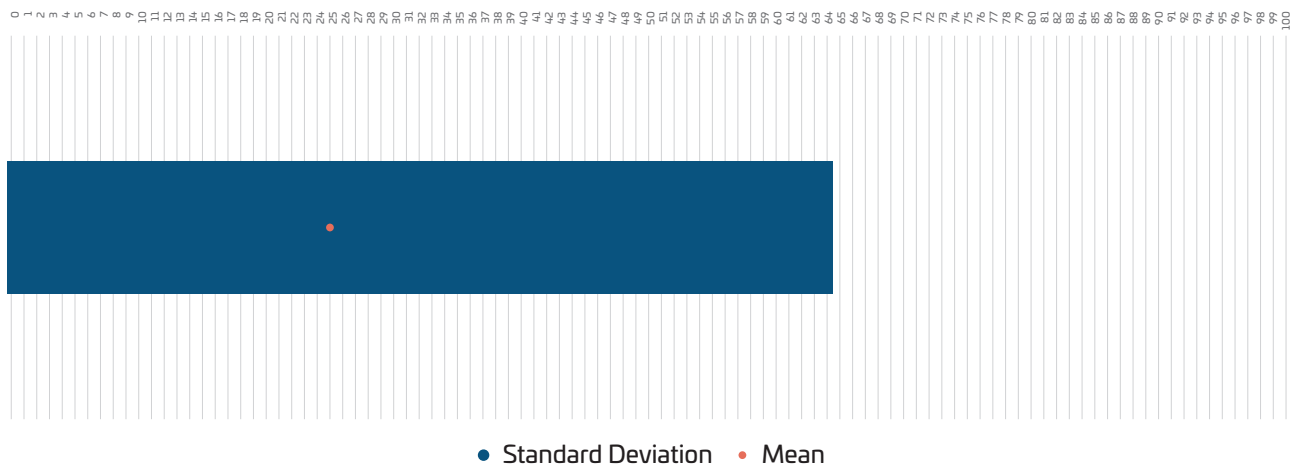


Figure 34. How important is the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia for you as a swimming expert in Croatia?

The comparison between Bulgarian and Croatian respondents highlights a substantial disparity in their perceptions. While Bulgarian respondents consistently emphasized the high importance of addressing hydrophobia, Croatian respondents demonstrated a more diverse range of opinions. This difference could be attributed to various factors, such as regional attitudes toward swimming education, cultural perspectives, or specific experiences related to hydrophobia. The survey responses suggest that the importance attributed to the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia varies significantly among participants. The high standard deviations in the overall and regional mean scores underscore the diversity of viewpoints within each group. It is important to acknowledge that the level of importance respondents assign to this topic can be influenced by factors such as personal experiences, cultural beliefs, and societal norms. The wide range of opinions highlights the complexity of addressing hydrophobia and underscores the need for tailored approaches that consider regional and individual differences in perceptions and attitudes.



Question 17. Are you interested in the topic of overcoming kids’ hydrophobia and willing to receive more information/practices?

The responses from the survey participants regarding their interest in the topic of overcoming kids’ hydrophobia and their willingness to receive more information and practices provide valuable insights into the engagement level of the respondents with this subject matter.

The survey indicates that a significant majority of respondents are interested in the topic of overcoming kids’ hydrophobia and are open to receiving more information and practical guidance. Of the total respondents, 83 individuals, representing 82.18% of the participants, expressed their strong interest and willingness to learn more about strategies to address this issue.

A smaller proportion of respondents indicated a lack of interest or uncertainty regarding their willingness to engage further with this topic. A total of 9 respondents (8.91%) explicitly stated that they are not interested in the topic, while an equal number of respondents (8.91%) mentioned that they are unsure whether they want to receive more information and practices. (Fig. 35)

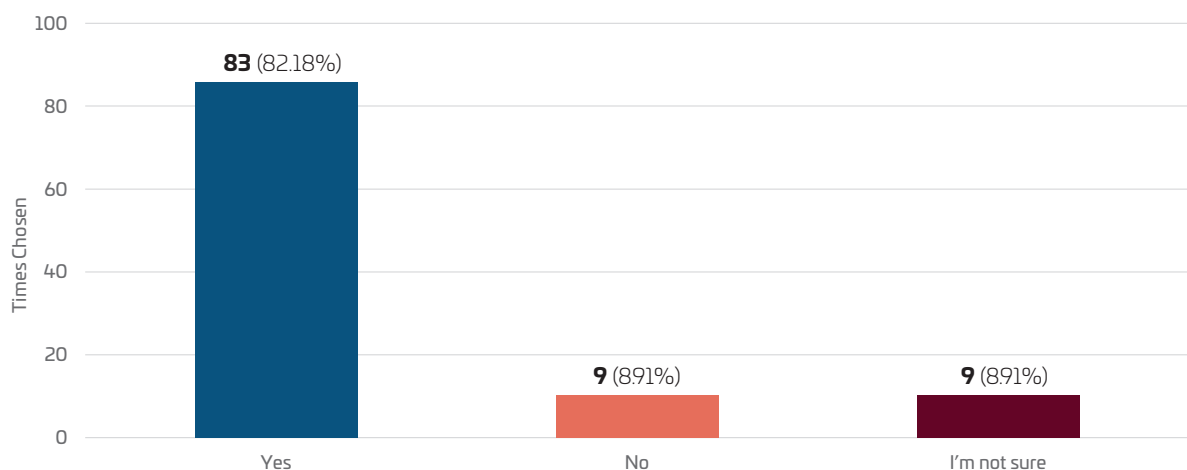


Figure 35. Are you interested in the topic of overcoming kids’ hydrophobia and willing to receive more information/practices?

The high level of interest demonstrated by the majority of participants indicates a genuine curiosity and eagerness to learn about effective methods to overcome kids’ hydrophobia. This interest can potentially lead to improved practices and interventions that address this issue in a more comprehensive and empathetic manner.

For the small percentage of respondents who expressed lack of interest or uncertainty, it might be valuable to consider outreach efforts that highlight the potential benefits of addressing kids’ hydrophobia. By showcasing success stories, practical solutions, and the positive impact of overcoming hydrophobia on a child’s overall well-being, it may be possible to increase engagement and understanding.



The responses reflect a strong interest among a majority of participants to delve deeper into the topic of overcoming kids’ hydrophobia. This positive reception suggests an opportunity to provide valuable resources, information, and practices that can contribute to the effective management of this issue. Recognizing and responding to this interest can lead to improved strategies for helping children overcome hydrophobia and fostering a more positive relationship with water.

Question 18. If you have practical information and exercises of overcoming hydrophobia with your swimmers, would you be willing to try those exercises?

The responses from the survey participants regarding their willingness to try practical information and exercises aimed at overcoming hydrophobia with their swimmers provide valuable insights into their receptiveness to new approaches and techniques in addressing this challenge.

The survey results indicate a high level of willingness among respondents to try practical information and exercises specifically designed to help swimmers overcome hydrophobia. An overwhelming majority of respondents, a total of 91 individuals representing 91% of the participants, expressed their strong willingness to engage with these exercises. The significant percentage of respondents who are enthusiastic about trying these exercises highlights their receptiveness to innovative approaches in their coaching methods. This openness to new techniques suggests that swimming professionals are continuously seeking ways to enhance their practice and provide effective support to their swimmers. A small fraction of respondents indicated reluctance or uncertainty about trying the proposed exercises. Only 5 respondents (5%) stated that they are not willing to try the exercises, while an additional 4 respondents (4%) expressed uncertainty about their willingness to do so.

For those respondents who are unsure, it could be valuable for the project team to provide additional information and insights into the potential benefits of incorporating these exercises into their coaching regimen. Addressing concerns, providing success stories, and showcasing the positive impact of these exercises could potentially encourage more respondents to consider trying them.

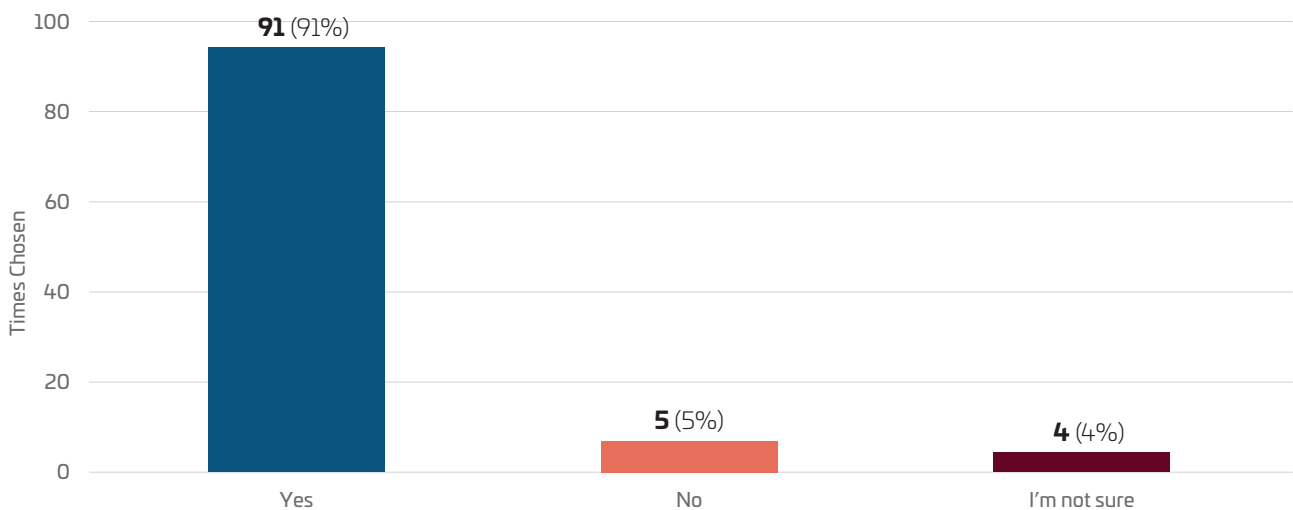


Figure 36. If you have practical information and exercises of overcoming hydrophobia with your swimmers, would you be willing to try those exercises?

The high percentage of respondents who are willing to try practical information and exercises for overcoming hydrophobia underscores their commitment to professional development and their dedication to assisting their swimmers in overcoming this fear. This positive response indicates an opportunity to offer valuable resources and tools to swimming professionals, enabling them to better support their swimmers’ journey toward overcoming hydrophobia. The survey results emphasize the importance of providing comprehensive and targeted support to those swimmers who experience this fear, aligning with the overall goal of creating a positive and empowering swimming environment for all individuals.



Question 19. What would be the most convenient format for you to gain new information about hydrophobia?

The responses gathered from the survey participants regarding the most convenient format for gaining new information about hydrophobia offer insights into their preferred methods of learning and accessing knowledge on this important topic. (Fig.37)

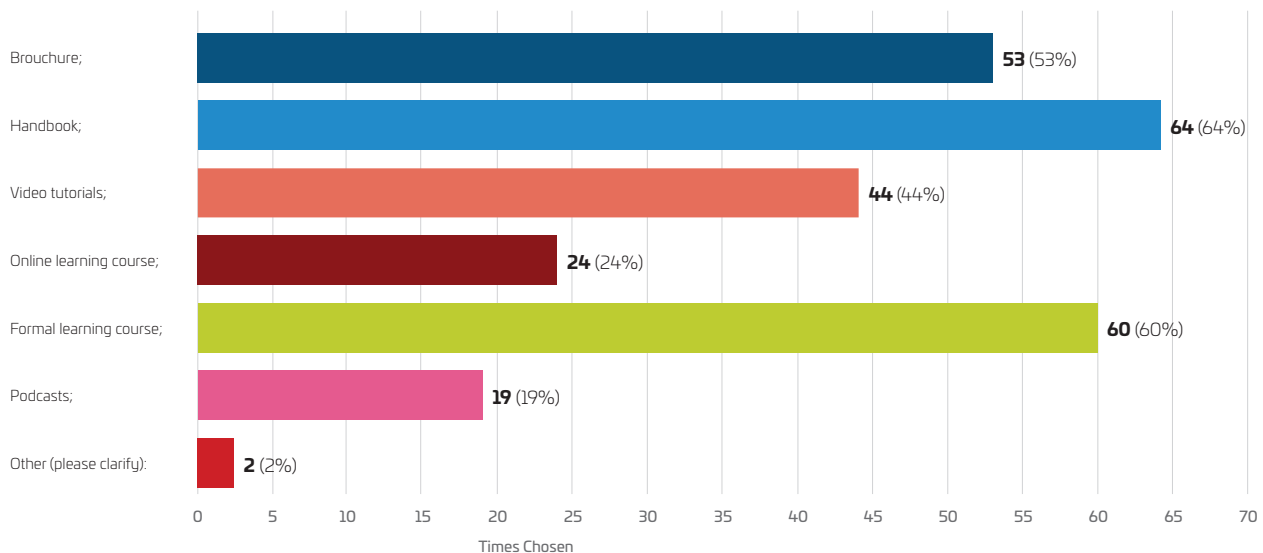


Figure 37. What would be the most convenient format for you to gain new information about hydrophobia?

The most convenient formats for the respondents to gain new information about hydrophobia are:

- **Handbooks:** Similarly, handbooks were deemed highly convenient by 64% of respondents. Handbooks offer a more comprehensive approach compared to brochures, providing in-depth knowledge, strategies, and practical tips for overcoming hydrophobia. Their organized structure and portability make them a valuable resource for swimming professionals to consult and apply in their coaching practices;
- **Formal Learning Course:** A significant number of respondents, totalling 60%, favoured formal learning courses. This format suggests a desire for a comprehensive and systematic approach to understanding and addressing hydrophobia. A formal course could offer a well-structured curriculum, expert guidance, and opportunities for hands-on practice;
- **Brochures:** A significant portion of respondents, accounting for 53% of the participants, indicated that brochures would be the most convenient format for them to gain new information about hydrophobia. Brochures are likely favoured for their concise and visually engaging nature, providing quick access to key information that swimming professionals can refer to during their coaching sessions;
- **Video Tutorials:** 44% of respondents expressed interest in video tutorials as a preferred format for learning about hydrophobia. Video tutorials provide a dynamic and visual means of conveying information, making it easier for swimming professionals to grasp concepts, techniques, and demonstrations related to overcoming hydrophobia;
- **Online Learning Course:** 24% of respondents indicated a preference for online learning courses. These courses offer a structured and interactive learning experience that can be accessed at their convenience. Online platforms could provide a convenient way to delve deeper into hydrophobia-related content, engage in interactive exercises, and participate in discussions with peers;
- **Podcasts:** 19% of respondents expressed interest in podcasts as a mode of learning about hydrophobia. Podcasts provide flexibility, allowing professionals to listen and learn while on the go. This format is particularly suitable for those who prefer auditory learning and appreciate the convenience of consuming content during their daily activities;



- Other Formats: A small fraction of respondents (2%) indicated “other” as their preferred format. While not specified, these responses could encompass unique learning preferences that are not covered by the provided options. This suggests the importance of considering a diverse range of formats to cater to varying learning styles.

The responses from Bulgarian and Croatian respondents regarding the most convenient format for gaining new information about hydrophobia provide valuable insights into the preferences of swimming professionals in these two countries.

Bulgarian Respondents:

- Among Bulgarian respondents, video tutorials emerged as the most favoured format, with 69.39% indicating their preference for this mode of learning. Video tutorials are likely appealing due to their visual and dynamic nature, enabling professionals to witness practical demonstrations and techniques related to overcoming hydrophobia;
- Handbooks and online learning courses were tied, both garnering interest from 48.98% and 36.73% of respondents, respectively. This suggests a balanced desire for both comprehensive resources like handbooks and the interactive approach offered by online learning courses;
- Formal learning courses also received significant attention, with 36.73% of respondents expressing interest. The appeal of formal courses lies in their structured curriculum and expert guidance, providing professionals with a systematic approach to understanding and addressing hydrophobia;
- Podcasts, though not as prominent, were still preferred by a notable 32.65% of Bulgarian respondents. Podcasts offer flexibility and convenience, allowing professionals to learn while multitasking or during downtime;
- Brochures, with a preference from 24.49% of respondents, remain a valued resource. Brochures are likely appreciated for their succinct and visually engaging content, providing quick access to key information.

Croatian Respondents:

- Croatian respondents exhibited a preference for more traditional formats. Brochures and formal learning courses were the most favoured, each chosen by 83.67% of respondents. This indicates a strong inclination towards concise information (brochures) and structured education (formal courses);
- Handbooks closely followed, with 81.63% of respondents expressing interest. Handbooks offer a comprehensive and organized approach to learning about hydrophobia, catering to those who seek in-depth knowledge;
- Video tutorials garnered interest from a smaller fraction of Croatian respondents, with 18.37% indicating a preference. While not as high as other formats, this suggests that visual demonstrations are still valued by a subset of professionals;
- Online learning courses and podcasts received comparatively lower attention, with 10.2% and 6.12% of respondents favouring them, respectively. It’s possible that these formats may not align with the learning preferences of the Croatian respondents to the same extent as other formats.

The preferences of Bulgarian and Croatian respondents reveal that both video tutorials and handbooks are sought-after formats for gaining new information about hydrophobia. However, there are nuanced variations between the two groups. Bulgarian professionals show a strong inclination towards visual learning, whereas Croatian respondents lean towards more traditional formats like brochures and formal learning courses. Understanding these preferences can help tailor the delivery of information to better cater to the learning styles of swimming professionals in these respective countries. The diverse range of preferred formats for gaining new information about hydrophobia underscores the importance of offering a variety of resources to accommodate different learning preferences. Swimming professionals value concise brochures, comprehensive handbooks, dynamic video tutorials, interactive online courses, structured formal courses, and convenient podcasts. By providing information in these preferred formats, professionals are more likely to engage with and effectively apply



knowledge to their coaching practices, ultimately contributing to the successful management and overcoming of hydrophobia among their swimmers.

Parents' perspective

Understanding and addressing the fear or phobia of water in young swimmers requires a multifaceted approach that involves both swimming coaches and parents. Each of these parties brings unique insights, experiences, and perspectives that contribute to a holistic understanding of the child's situation and enable the development of effective strategies for overcoming hydrophobia.

Swimming coaches are on the frontlines of teaching and interacting with young swimmers in a controlled aquatic environment. They observe the child's behaviour, reactions, and progress during lessons, gaining valuable first-hand insights into their fears and challenges. Coaches can identify specific triggers that evoke fear, monitor the child's responses to different techniques, and adjust their teaching methods accordingly. By collaborating with coaches, parents gain access to these observations, which help them understand their child's experiences in the pool.

Parents, on the other hand, hold a unique and intimate perspective on their child's emotional and psychological development. They witness the child's behaviour outside of swimming lessons and can identify any incidents, experiences, or factors beyond the pool that might contribute to the child's hydrophobia. Parents' observations of their child's demeanour, emotions, and interactions with water in various settings offer insights that coaches might not have access to. Additionally, parents often play a significant role in reinforcing strategies learned in lessons, helping the child practice and cope with their fears beyond the swimming pool environment.

Combining the observations and insights of both coaches and parents paints a more complete picture of the child's hydrophobia. Coaches provide a professional assessment based on their expertise in swimming instruction, while parents offer personal insights into the child's individual personality, sensitivities, and life experiences. This combined knowledge allows for tailored strategies that consider both the child's unique needs and the challenges presented by water-related activities.

Moreover, collaboration between coaches and parents fosters a supportive and consistent approach. When parents and coaches are aligned in their understanding and strategies, the child receives a cohesive message and supportive environment. This unity of approach reinforces the child's confidence, trust, and sense of security, crucial components for overcoming hydrophobia.

Involving both swimming coaches and parents in addressing the fear or phobia of water in young swimmers is essential for a comprehensive and effective approach. Their collaboration brings together professional expertise, personal insights, emotional support, and a unified strategy that empowers the child to gradually overcome their fear and develop a positive relationship with water.

In the following analysis is revealed the perspective on hydrophobia in early age of 262 parents from Bulgaria and Croatia with their valuable insights on this challenge for the kids, as well as their point of view for overcoming the fear of water.



Question 1. Your current residence?

The respondents' current residence plays a significant role in shaping their experiences, perceptions, and opportunities related to overcoming hydrophobia. Understanding the distribution of respondents across different residence types provides insights into how the geographical context might influence their familiarity with water environments, access to swimming facilities, and exposure to water-related activities. The overall distribution shows that a considerable percentage of respondents reside in big cities (43.89%), followed by capitals (32.06%), small cities (20.23%), and villages (3.82%). This highlights the urban concentration of the respondents, with more individuals living in larger urban centres. (Fig. 38)

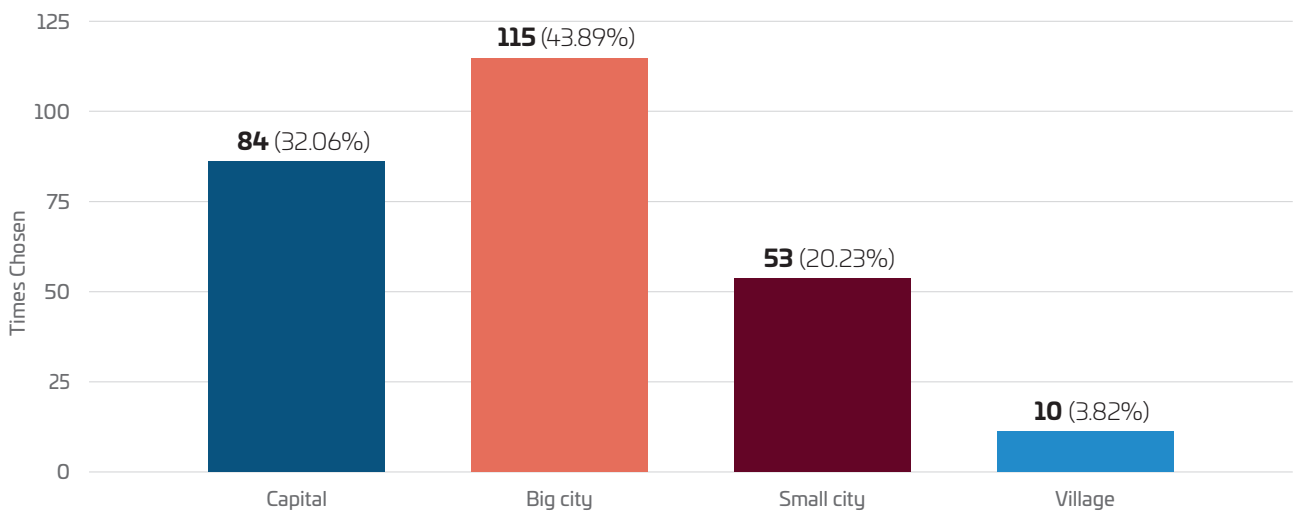


Figure 38. Your current residence

Breaking down the results by country, Bulgarian respondents display a similar pattern to the overall distribution. The highest percentage resides in big cities (44.95%), followed closely by the capital (34.85%), and then small cities (17.68%). Village residents represent the smallest percentage (2.53%). This alignment with the overall distribution suggests that Bulgarian respondents' experiences and perceptions are relatively consistent with the general trend. (Fig. 39)

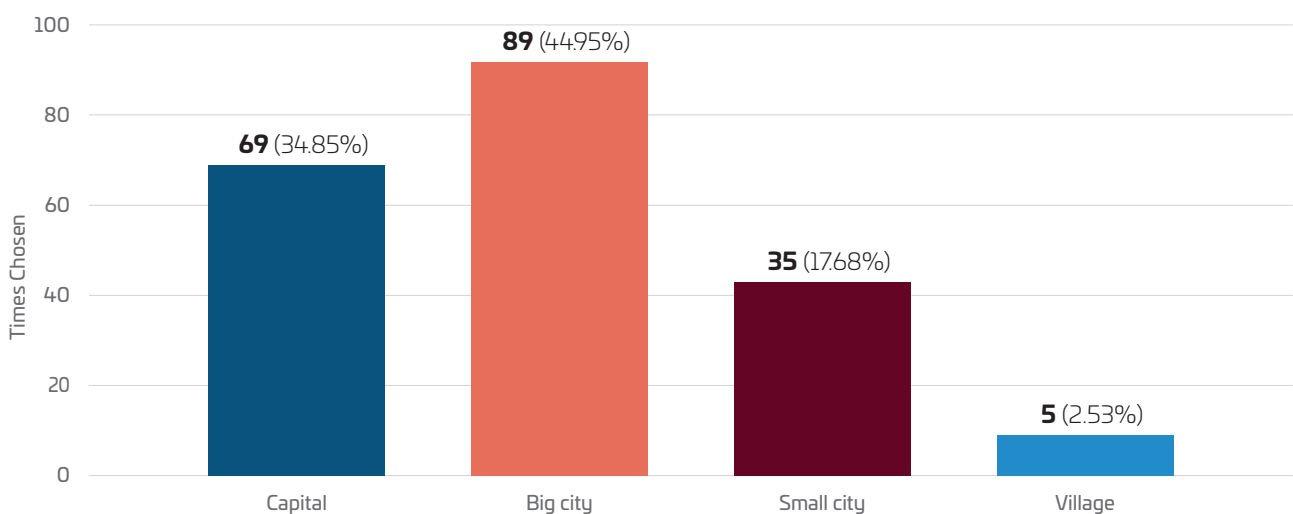


Figure 39. Your current residence (Bulgarian respondents)



Croatian respondents also share similarities with the overall distribution, but there are some variations. The highest percentage resides in big cities (40.63%), followed by small cities (28.13%), and then the capital (23.44%). Village residents represent the smallest percentage (7.81%). The Croatian respondents' distribution indicates a slightly higher representation of those living in big cities compared to the overall pattern, and a relatively lower presence in the capital. This might reflect differences in urbanization and residential patterns in Croatia compared to the general trend. (Fig. 40)

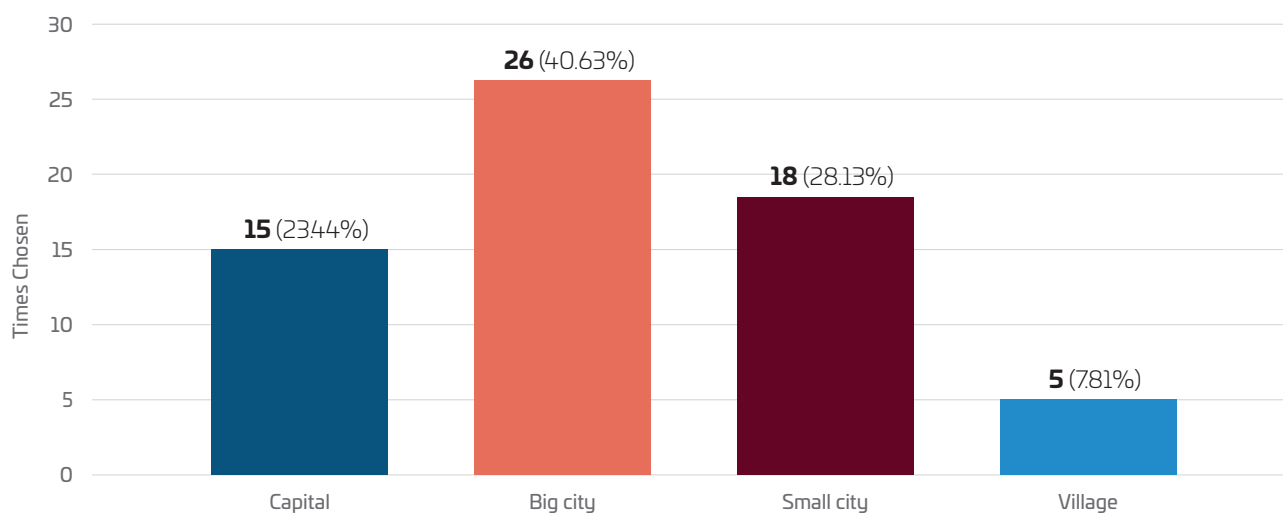


Figure 40. Your current residence (Croatian respondents)

The distribution of respondents' current residences across different types of areas, such as capitals, big cities, small cities, and villages, sheds light on the urban concentration of the respondents. While the distribution among Bulgarian respondents closely aligns with the overall trend, Croatian respondents show some variations that might reflect unique urbanization patterns in their country. The geographical context of the respondents' residence can influence their access to swimming facilities, water-related activities, and exposure to water environments, potentially impacting their perceptions and experiences related to overcoming hydrophobia.





Question 2. Please provide information of your experience with swimming (years).

The respondents' years of experience with swimming provide valuable insights into their background and potential expertise in water-related activities. Understanding the distribution of experience levels helps us gauge the range of knowledge and skills that respondents might possess. The overall mean years of experience with swimming is 16.85, with a standard deviation ranging from 3.23 to 36.93. This indicates a wide variability in the respondents' swimming experience, suggesting the presence of both novices and more seasoned individuals in the sample. (Fig. 41)

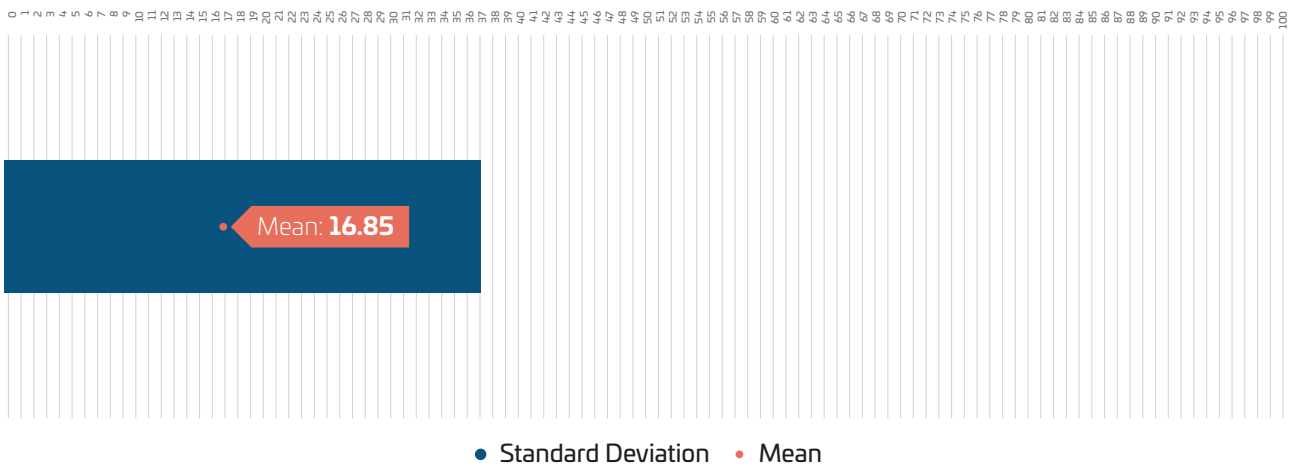


Figure 41. Please provide information of your experience with swimming (years).

Breaking down the results by country, Bulgarian respondents have a slightly higher mean years of experience with swimming, at 17.66, and a narrower standard deviation ranging from 1.96 to 37.28. This implies that Bulgarian respondents, on average, might have a bit more experience with swimming compared to the overall mean. The relatively lower standard deviation suggests a more consistent distribution of experience levels among Bulgarian respondents. (Fig. 42)

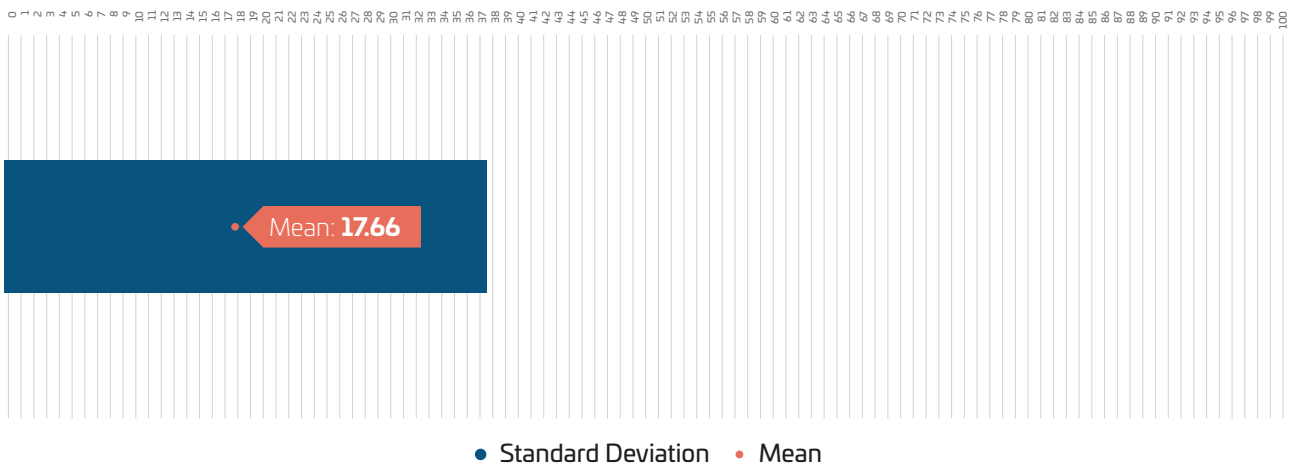


Figure 42. Please provide information of your experience with swimming (years) - Bulgarian respondents



Croatian respondents, on the other hand, show a slightly lower mean years of experience with swimming, at 14.43, and a wider standard deviation ranging from 6.81 to 35.67. This implies that, on average, Croatian respondents might have slightly less experience with swimming compared to both the overall mean and Bulgarian respondents. The higher standard deviation suggests a greater variability in swimming experience levels among Croatian respondents. (Fig. 43)

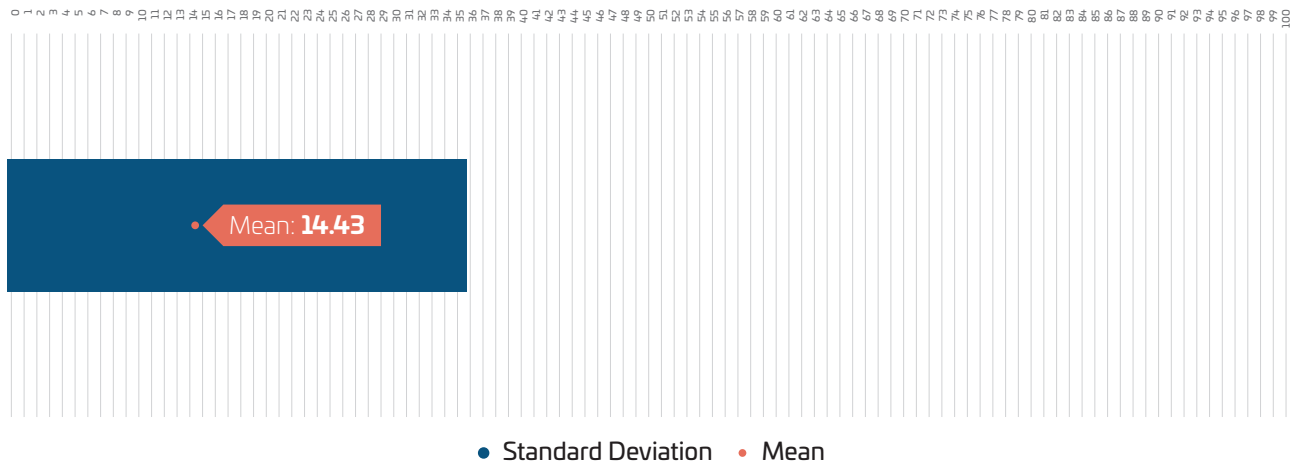


Figure 41. Please provide information of your experience with swimming (years) - Croatian respondents.

The analysis of respondents' years of experience with swimming reveals a diverse range of expertise within the sample. While the overall mean suggests a significant level of experience, the breakdown by country highlights variations. Bulgarian respondents seem to possess slightly more experience on average, with relatively consistent experience levels. In contrast, Croatian respondents show slightly less experience on average, with a wider range of experience levels. This information underscores the importance of considering the respondents' experience when interpreting their perceptions, insights, and expertise related to swimming and hydrophobia.





Question 3. Are you able to swim independently?

The question regarding respondents' ability to swim independently provides valuable insights into their personal experience and proficiency in swimming. Understanding this aspect is crucial when interpreting their perspectives and recommendations on overcoming hydrophobia. Overall, a substantial majority of respondents, 84.1%, indicated that they are able to swim independently. This suggests that a significant portion of the surveyed individuals possess the capability to navigate water on their own. (Fig. 42)

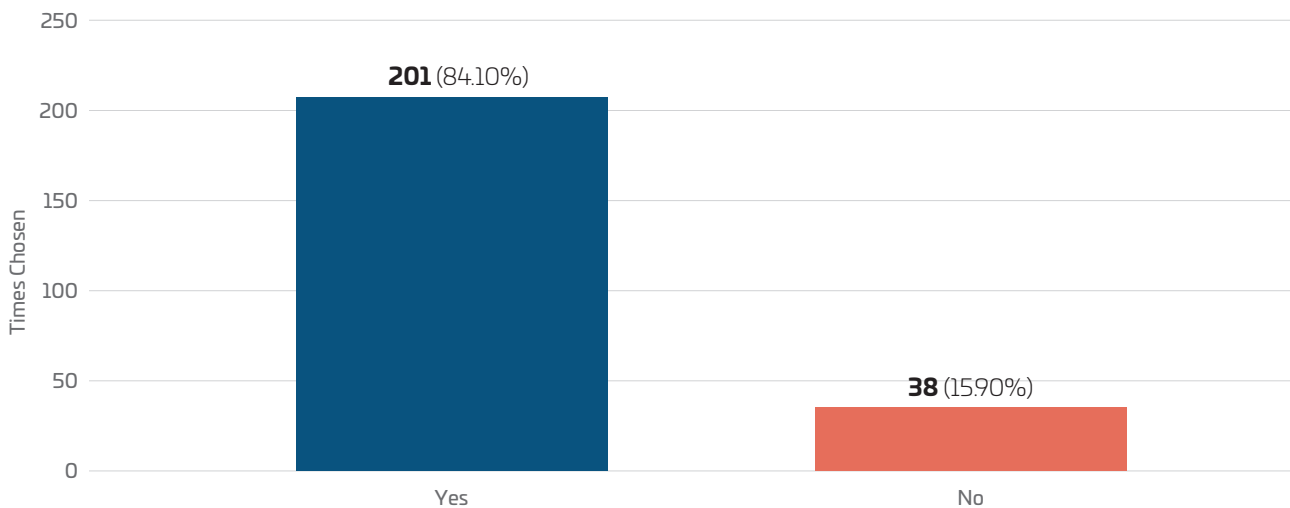


Figure 42. Are you able to swim independently?

Analysing the responses by country, Bulgarian respondents also demonstrate a notable ability to swim independently, with 80.9% answering affirmatively. This closely aligns with the overall trend, indicating a solid level of swimming proficiency among Bulgarians.

In the case of Croatian respondents, an even higher percentage, 93.44%, stated that they are capable of swimming independently. This is significantly above both the overall average and the Bulgarian respondents' rate. The relatively higher percentage of Croatian respondents who can swim independently suggests a strong swimming culture or familiarity with water-related activities in Croatia.

Conversely, a smaller percentage of respondents in each group stated that they are unable to swim independently. Overall, this proportion is 15.9%. Among Bulgarians, the rate is slightly higher, at 19.1%, while among Croatians, it is notably lower, at 6.56%.

The analysis of respondents' ability to swim independently underscores the importance of their personal experience and expertise. The majority of respondents in both groups possess the skills to navigate water independently, highlighting their potential insights and contributions to the discussion of overcoming hydrophobia. While the overall trend is reflected among Bulgarian respondents, Croatian respondents exhibit an even higher proficiency in swimming. These variations might influence their perspectives and approaches to addressing hydrophobia in young swimmers. The information also emphasizes the relevance of involving individuals who have experience with swimming when considering strategies to help children overcome their fear of water.

Question 4. How many times per year/How often your kid has the opportunity to enjoy water sports?

The frequency with which children have the opportunity to enjoy water sports plays a crucial role in shaping their comfort and familiarity with aquatic activities. Analysing the responses provides insights into the patterns of water-related engagement among respondents from different countries. Overall, the data indicates that a substantial portion of children have frequent opportunities for water sports. A significant 42.13% of respondents stated that their children enjoy water sports daily. This finding suggests that a considerable number of children

have regular exposure to water-related activities, potentially contributing to their comfort in aquatic environments. (Fig. 43)

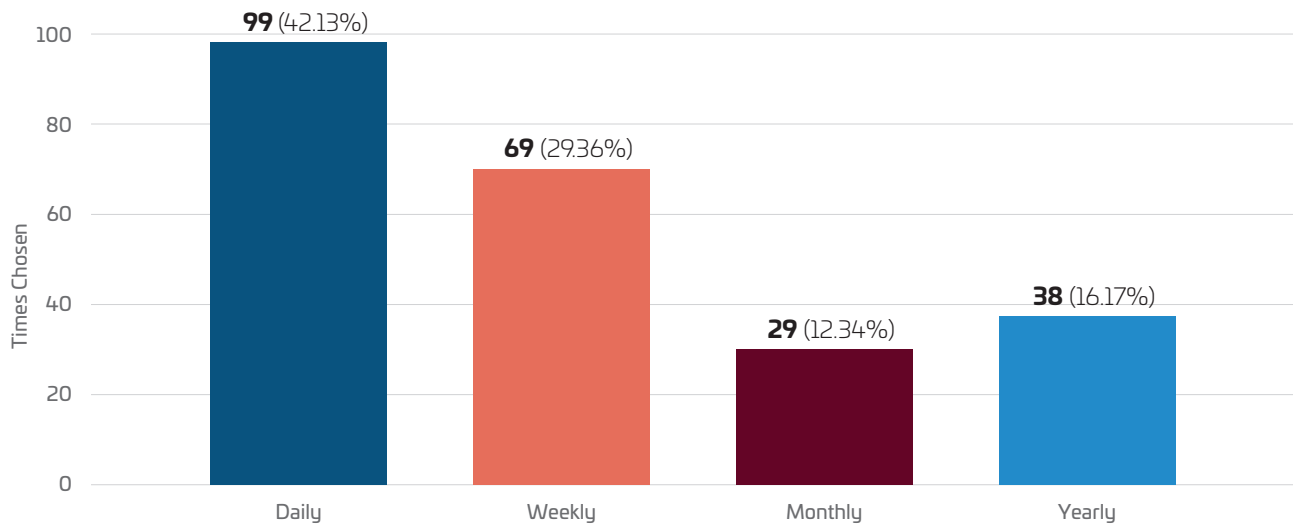


Figure 43. How many times per year/How often your kid has the opportunity to enjoy water sports?

Upon examining the responses from Bulgarian respondents, a different pattern emerges. A lower percentage of Bulgarian children, at 22.95%, have daily opportunities for water sports. This figure is below the overall average, indicating that Bulgarian children might have less frequent engagement with water-related activities. (Fig. 44)

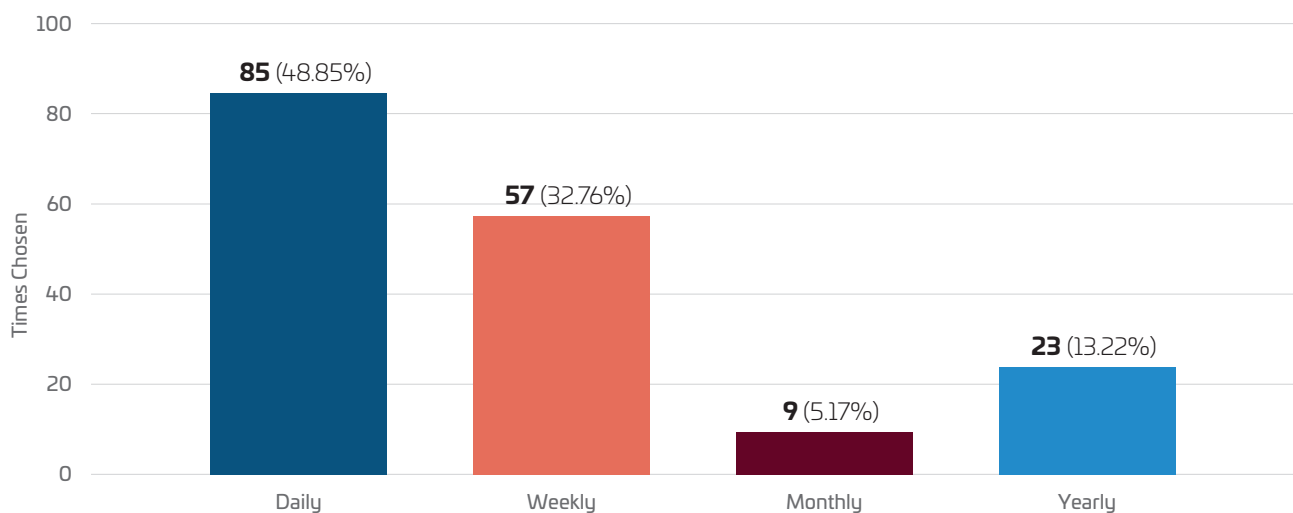


Figure 44. How many times per year/How often your kid has the opportunity to enjoy water sports (Bulgaria)?

Conversely, Croatian respondents show a notably higher percentage of children engaging in daily water sports, at 48.85%. This percentage is significantly higher than the overall average, suggesting that a substantial proportion of Croatian children have daily exposure to water activities, potentially enhancing their comfort levels around water.

When considering weekly water sports opportunities, the overall response stands at 29.36%. Among Bulgarian respondents, 19.67% of children enjoy water sports weekly. While this rate is lower than the overall average, it indicates that a considerable portion of Bulgarian children still have regular weekly exposure to water-related activities.



Croatian respondents also show a substantial weekly engagement rate, with 32.76% of children participating. This figure is higher than the overall average, highlighting that a significant number of Croatian children are actively involved in water sports on a weekly basis.

Moving to monthly opportunities for water sports, the overall percentage is 12.34%. Bulgarian respondents have a noticeably higher rate, with 32.79% of children enjoying water sports monthly. This suggests that water-related activities on a monthly basis are more prevalent among Bulgarian children compared to the overall average.

In contrast, Croatian respondents report a lower monthly engagement rate, at 5.17%. This indicates that a smaller proportion of Croatian children have monthly opportunities for water sports, potentially affecting their familiarity and comfort levels around water. (Fig. 45)

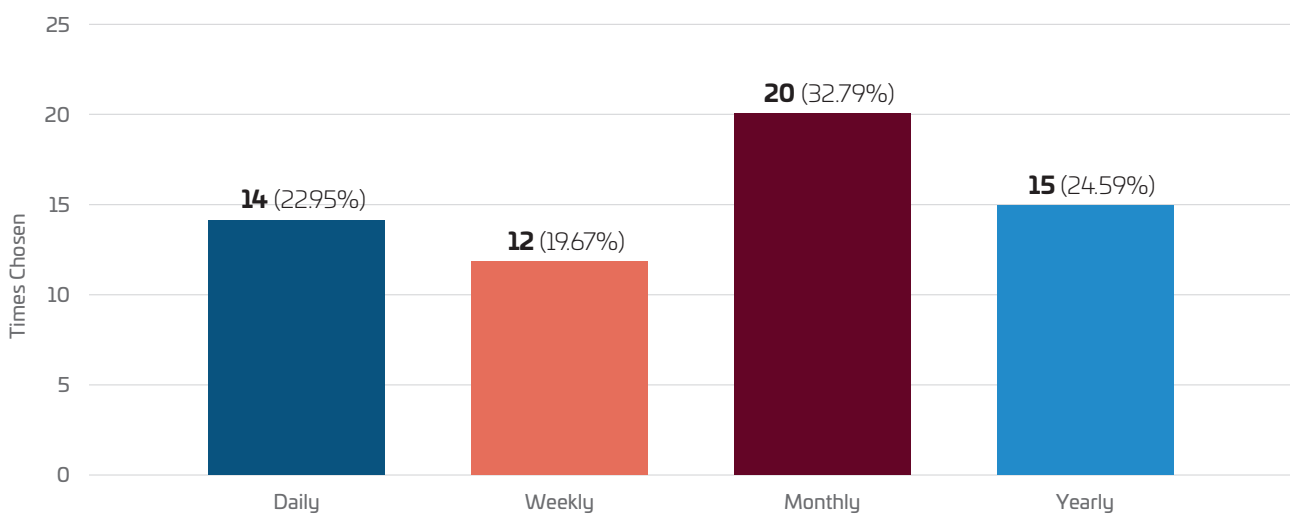


Figure 45. How many times per year/How often your kid has the opportunity to enjoy water sports (Croatia)?

Finally, the yearly water sports opportunities account for 16.17% of overall responses. Among Bulgarian children, 24.59% have the chance to engage in water sports yearly. This suggests that a considerable portion of Bulgarian children still experience water sports activities on a yearly basis. Among Croatian respondents, 13.22% of children have yearly water sports opportunities. While this rate is lower than the overall average, it still signifies that a portion of Croatian children have some yearly exposure to water activities.

The analysis of children’s opportunities for water sports highlights variations between the overall average, Bulgarian respondents, and Croatian respondents. Daily water sports activities are more prevalent among Croatian children, while weekly engagement is significant in both Croatia and Bulgaria. Monthly opportunities are notably prominent among Bulgarian children, while yearly activities are present to varying degrees in both countries. These variations could influence children’s comfort levels around water, emphasizing the importance of tailoring strategies to address and overcome hydrophobia in young swimmers based on their water-related engagement patterns.

Question 5. Main water environment

Analysing the statistics related to the respondents’ main water environments provides valuable insights into the types of aquatic settings where children are most frequently exposed to water. The data reveals a clear distinction between natural water environments and artificial ones, shedding light on how different geographic regions and aquatic opportunities may influence children’s aquatic experiences and potentially their hydrophobia tendencies.

Looking at the overall responses, 84.26% of participants indicated that their children’s main water environment is artificial, primarily in swimming pools. This high percentage highlights the prevalence of controlled and structured aquatic environments in shaping children’s interactions with water. On the other hand, 36.17% of overall respon-

dents indicated that their children’s main water environment is natural, encompassing seas, oceans, lakes, and rivers. While the percentage is lower compared to artificial environments, it suggests a significant number of children have the opportunity to interact with water in more open and diverse natural settings. (Fig. 46)

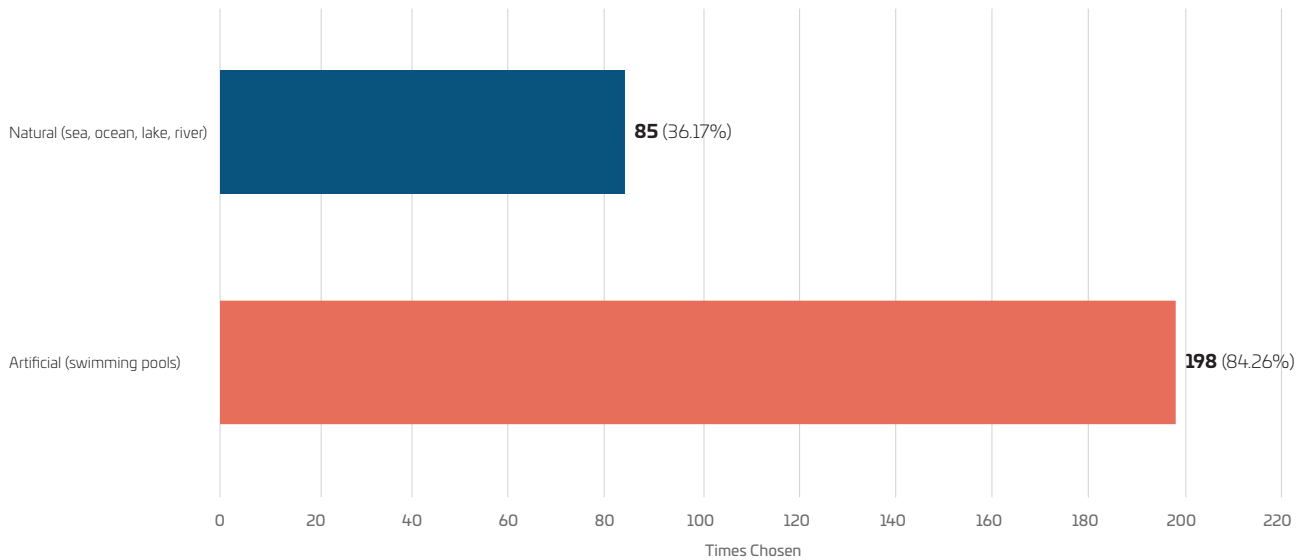


Figure 46. Main water environment.

When examining the Bulgarian respondents’ data, an interesting contrast emerges. A majority of Bulgarian participants (90.8%) indicated that their children’s main water environment is artificial, aligning with the overall trend. However, a notable proportion of Bulgarian respondents (26.44%) also indicated natural water environments as the main setting. This could imply that in Bulgaria, while swimming pools are still dominant, a substantial number of children also have access to natural water bodies. (Fig. 47)

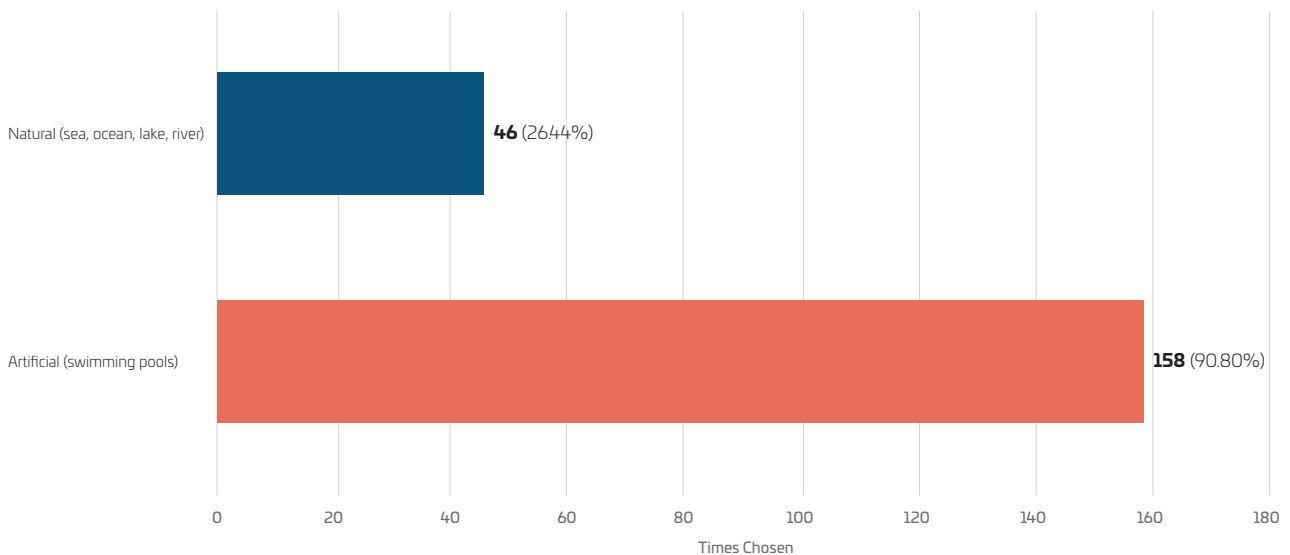


Figure 47. Main water environment (Bulgaria)

Moving to the Croatian respondents, a distinct pattern emerges. A significant majority (65.57%) indicated that their children’s main water environment is artificial, consistent with the overall trend. However, what stands out is that a higher percentage of Croatian respondents (63.93%) indicated natural water environments as the main setting. This suggests that in Croatia, natural water bodies like seas, oceans, lakes, and rivers play a more prominent role in children’s aquatic experiences compared to the overall sample. (Fig. 48)

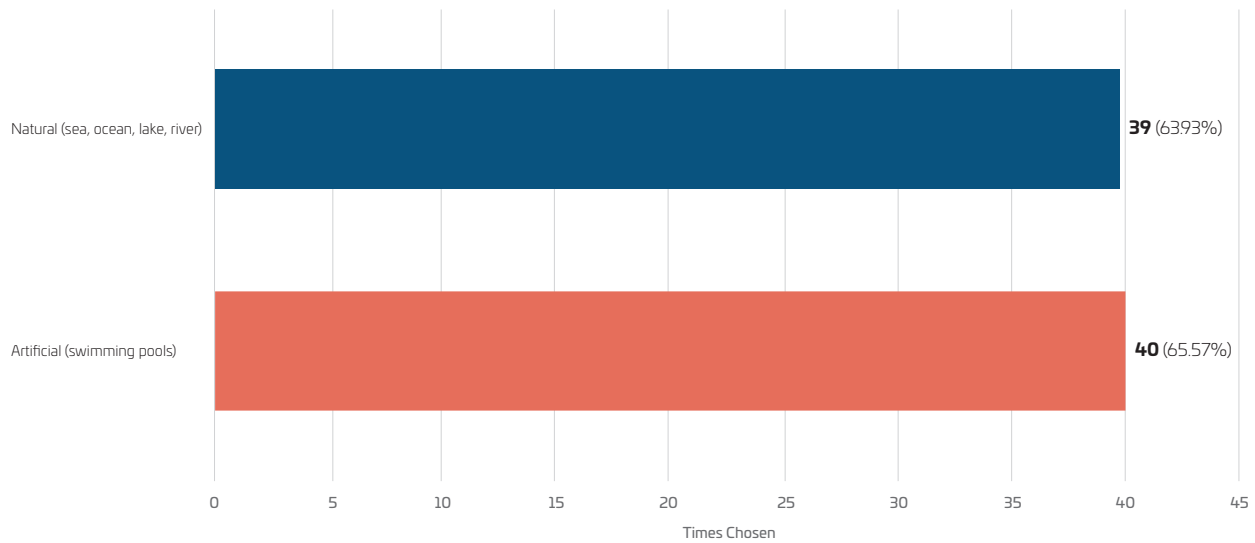


Figure 48. Main water environment (Croatia)

Analysing the main water environments of respondents reveals a strong prevalence of artificial settings, such as swimming pools, in shaping children’s aquatic experiences. However, there are regional differences that show the influence of geographic context. In Bulgaria, while swimming pools remain dominant, a significant number of children also have access to natural water environments. In Croatia, natural water bodies play a more substantial role, indicating that the proximity to seas, oceans, lakes, and rivers may contribute to shaping children’s interactions with water and their potential hydrophobia tendencies.

Question 6. Is your kid involved in swimming trainings?

Analysing the statistics concerning whether children are involved in swimming training provides valuable insights into the prevalence of formal aquatic education and its potential impact on children’s hydrophobia tendencies. The data reveals both similarities and differences across the overall sample, as well as within the Bulgarian and Croatian respondents’ groups. In the overall responses, a significant majority (77.35%) indicated that their children are indeed involved in swimming training. This high percentage underscores the widespread recognition of the importance of teaching children to swim, which not only enhances water safety but also contributes to their overall confidence and comfort in aquatic environments. (Fig. 49)

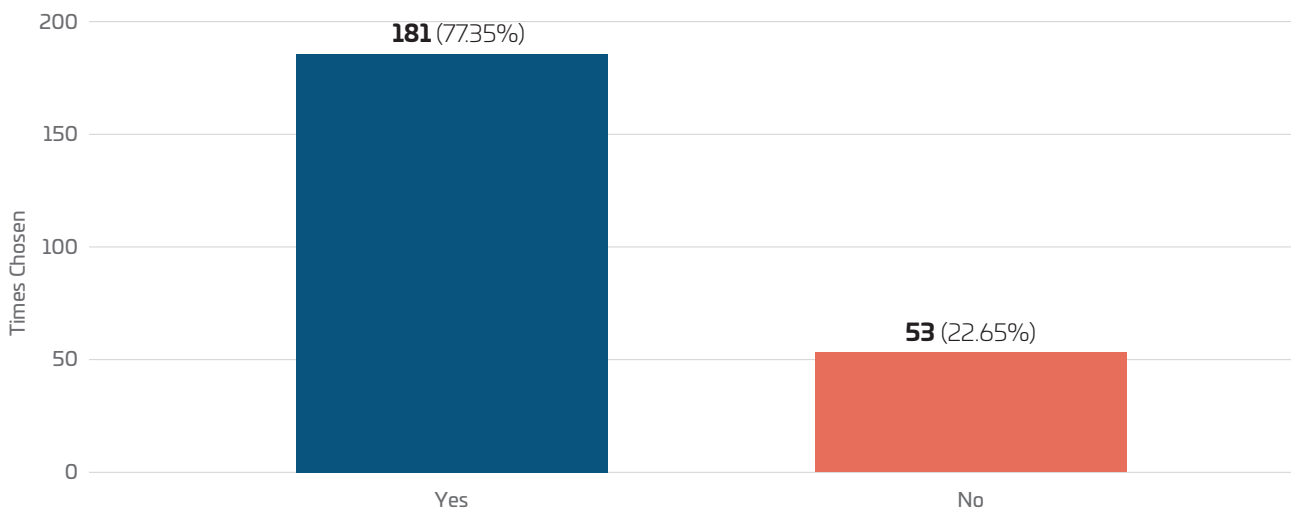


Figure 49. Is your kid involved in swimming trainings?



Looking specifically at the Bulgarian respondents, the data shows a similar trend, with an even higher percentage (82.08%) indicating that their children are involved in swimming training. This strong emphasis on formal aquatic education in Bulgaria reflects a proactive approach towards overcoming potential hydrophobia tendencies and promoting water confidence among children.

Moving on to the Croatian respondents, an interesting difference emerges. While a majority (63.93%) indicated that their children are involved in swimming training, the percentage is comparatively lower than both the overall sample and the Bulgarian respondents. This discrepancy could be attributed to various factors, including differences in access to swimming facilities, cultural attitudes towards swimming, and the presence of natural water bodies like seas and lakes.

The statistics related to children’s involvement in swimming training highlight the widespread recognition of the importance of formal aquatic education in building water confidence and safety skills. The high percentages in the overall sample and among Bulgarian respondents indicate a proactive approach to addressing hydrophobia tendencies through structured training. The lower percentage among Croatian respondents suggests a potential variation in access to swimming facilities and cultural attitudes towards swimming, which may influence children’s opportunities for formal aquatic education. Overall, these findings emphasize the positive impact of swimming training on children’s relationship with water and their potential to overcome hydrophobia.

Question 7. If yes, for how long (in years)

Analysing the statistics regarding the duration of children’s involvement in swimming training sheds light on the extent of their exposure to formal aquatic education, which can significantly impact their water confidence and potential hydrophobia tendencies. The data reveals both similarities and notable differences among the overall respondents, as well as within the Bulgarian and Croatian respondents’ groups. In the overall responses, the mean duration of children’s involvement in swimming training stands at 7.8 years. This average indicates a relatively extensive engagement with formal aquatic education, suggesting that many children have had the opportunity to build strong swimming skills and enhance their comfort in water environments. The standard deviation range (7.55–23.15) underscores the variability in responses, with some children participating for a shorter period and others for a more extended time. Looking at the Bulgarian respondents, we observe a remarkably similar pattern, with the mean duration of involvement in swimming training also averaging 7.8 years. This consistency in the average duration indicates that Bulgarian children, on average, have experienced a similar extent of formal aquatic education as the overall sample. The standard deviation range (7.56–26.08) illustrates a similar degree of variability in response duration. (Fig. 50)

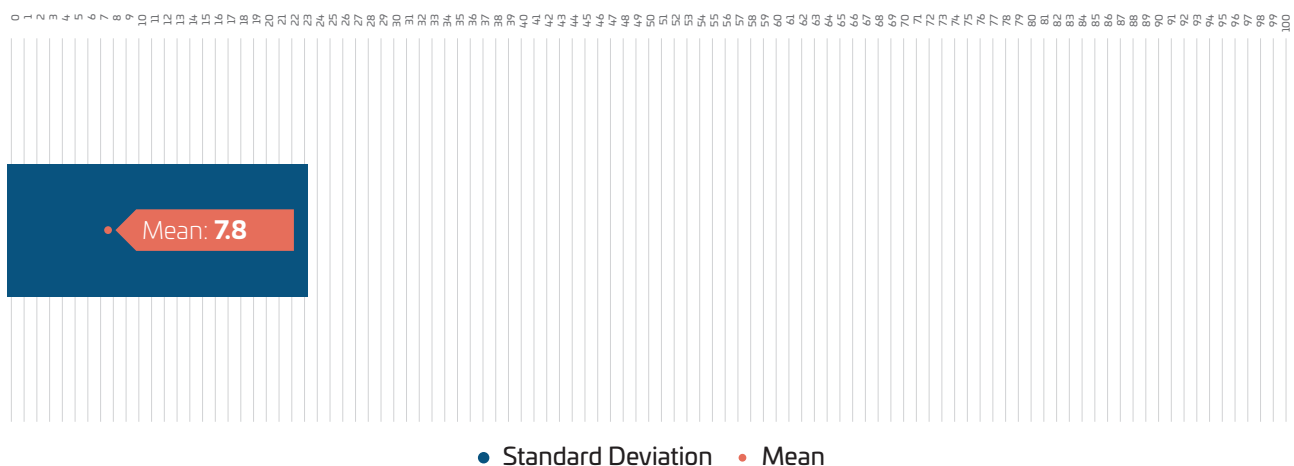


Figure 50. If yes, for how long (in years)

However, the Croatian respondents’ data stands out due to its lower average duration of involvement in swimming training, which is 2.17 years. This notably shorter average suggests that many Croatian children may not have had



as extensive exposure to formal aquatic education compared to the overall sample and Bulgarian respondents. The lower mean duration could be attributed to factors such as accessibility to swimming facilities, cultural attitudes towards swimming, or other factors that might influence the availability of swimming training opportunities for children. (Fig. 51)

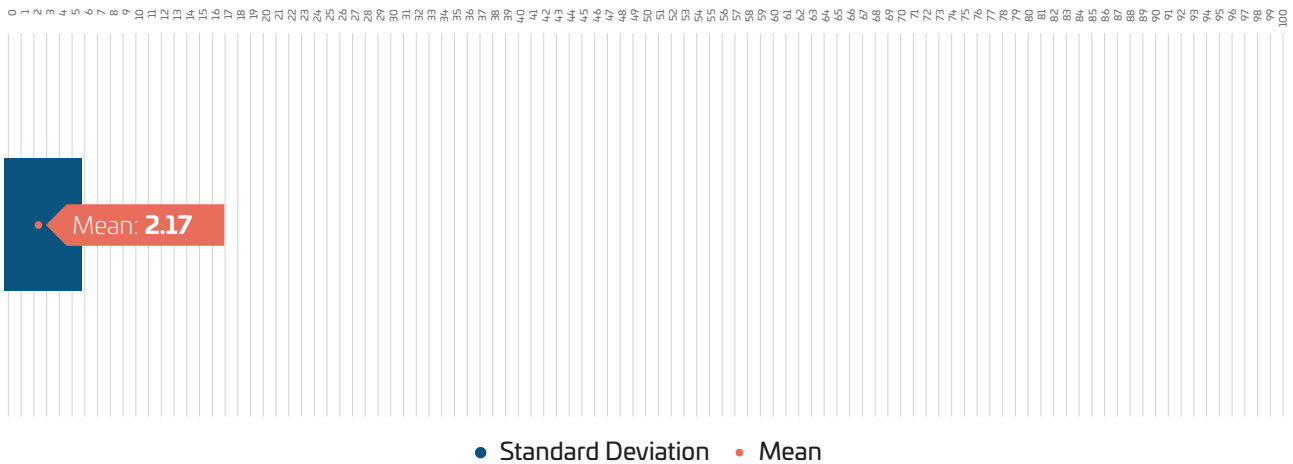


Figure 51. If yes, for how long in years (Croatian respondents)

The statistics related to the duration of children’s involvement in swimming training highlight both similarities and differences across the overall sample, Bulgarian, and Croatian respondents. The consistent mean duration among the overall sample and Bulgarian respondents indicates a widespread engagement with formal aquatic education, fostering potential water confidence and mitigating hydrophobia tendencies. The lower mean duration among Croatian respondents suggests a potential variation in access to swimming facilities or cultural factors influencing the availability of swimming training for children, potentially impacting their water comfort and hydrophobia management.





Question 8. Does your kid have hydrophobia?

Analysing the statistics pertaining to whether children have experienced hydrophobia provides valuable insights into the prevalence, resolution, and awareness of water-related fears among young swimmers. By examining the responses from both the overall sample and the specific Bulgarian and Croatian groups, we can discern similarities, differences, and potential conclusions. Across the overall responses, the data indicates that 6.22% of children have reported experiencing hydrophobia, signifying a portion of young swimmers who grapple with fear or discomfort in water environments. Conversely, the majority (78.22%) of children have not exhibited hydrophobia. This disparity highlights the varying degrees of water comfort and suggests that a substantial number of children have successfully overcome their water-related fears. (Fig. 52)

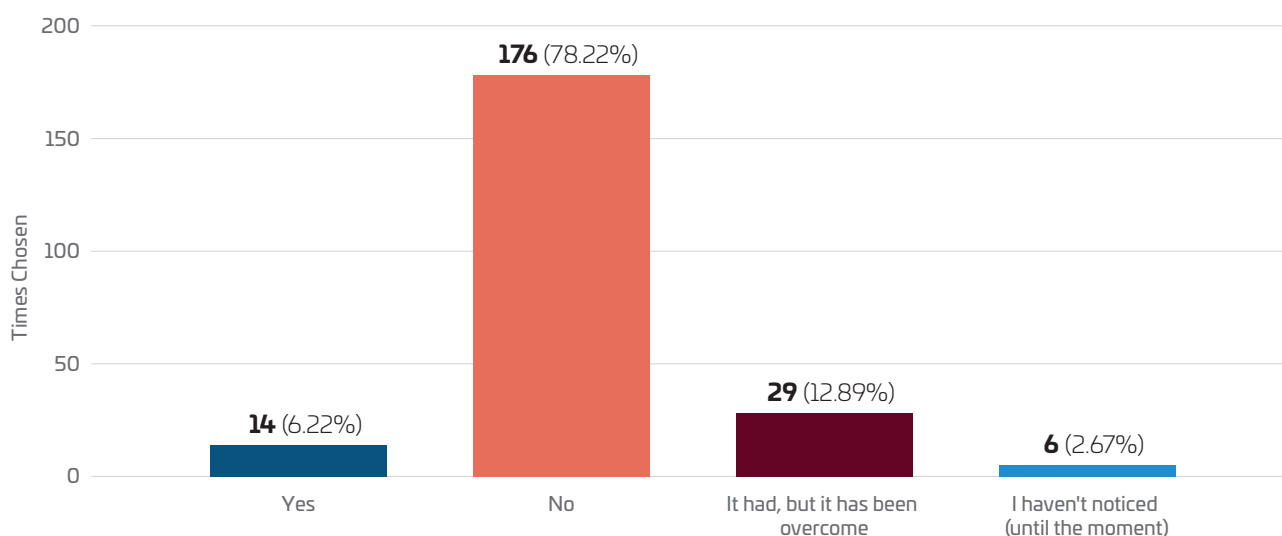


Figure 52. Does your kid have hydrophobia?

Analysing the Bulgarian respondents' data reveals a comparable pattern. A slightly lower percentage (4.76%) of Bulgarian children report experiencing hydrophobia, while the majority (78.57%) remain unaffected by such fears. Similarly, to the overall sample, a notable portion (13.1%) of Bulgarian children had initially faced hydrophobia but managed to overcome it, highlighting the potential effectiveness of interventions or natural developmental changes that enable children to confront and conquer their fears. (Fig. 53)

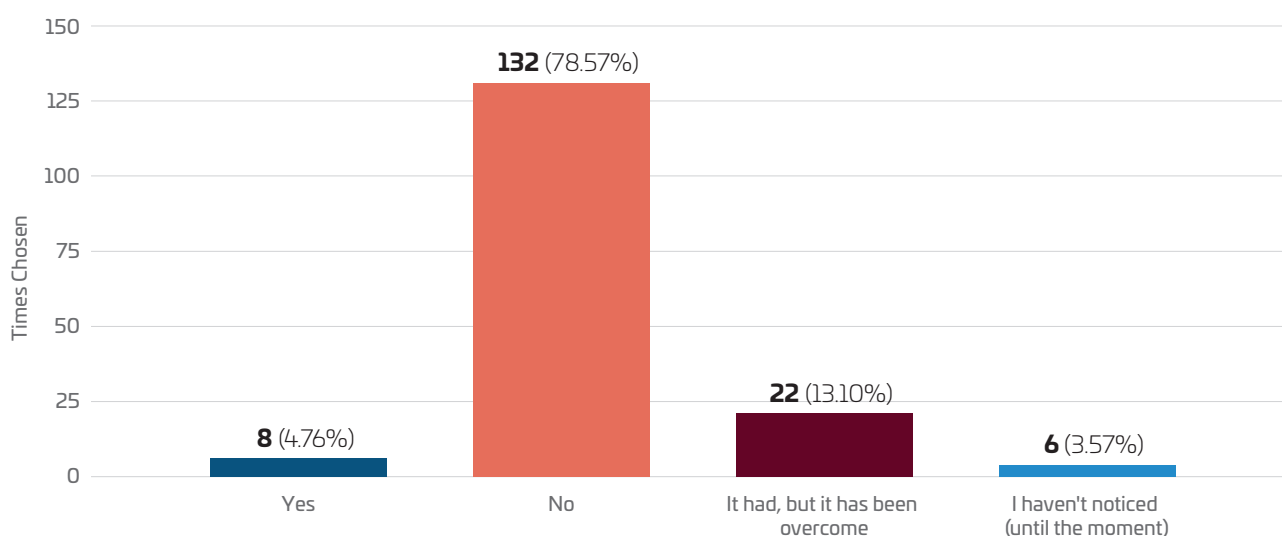


Figure 53. Does your kid have hydrophobia?



In the Croatian respondents' data, we notice a higher percentage (10.53%) of children who have experienced hydrophobia. This relatively elevated proportion might be attributed to various factors, including cultural attitudes toward water, swimming exposure, and environmental differences. The data also shows that a significant portion (12.28%) of Croatian children had previously experienced hydrophobia but successfully overcame it, reflecting positive progress in addressing water-related fears.

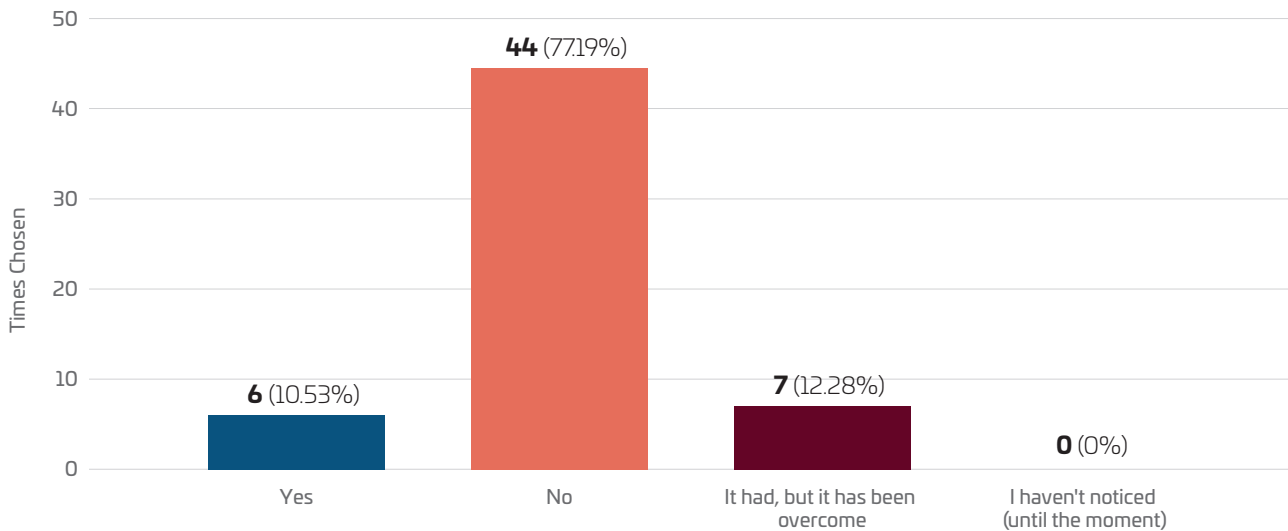


Figure 54. Does your kid have hydrophobia?

Additionally, the data reveals that a smaller percentage (2.67%) of children have hydrophobia that has gone unnoticed so far, regardless of their overall response. This finding highlights the potential challenges in identifying and addressing water-related fears in children, as some may not exhibit overt signs of discomfort.

After the analyse of the statistics related to children's experiences with hydrophobia underscore the diversity of responses within the overall sample, Bulgarian, and Croatian respondents. While the majority of children have not exhibited hydrophobia, a portion of them, especially in the Croatian group, have faced such fears. The presence of children who have overcome their hydrophobia suggests the potential effectiveness of interventions, supportive environments, and personal growth. Additionally, the existence of children with unnoticed hydrophobia emphasizes the importance of awareness and proactive measures in addressing these fears to ensure a positive aquatic experience for all young swimmers.

Question 9. What do you think causes hydrophobia in your kid?

The data reveals that there is an equal split (50%) in the perceptions that hydrophobia in children is caused by the vastness and mysteriousness of large pools of water and the thinking or fear that water could potentially be dangerous. This suggests a prominent connection between the unknown nature of water bodies and the fear of potential danger. These responses reflect a shared concern about the uncertainty associated with water environments and the potential risks they may pose to young swimmers.

Similarly, half of the respondents (50%) attribute hydrophobia to previous scary experiences in water, such as slipping, getting excessively splashed, or experiencing unwanted water immersion. This indicates a strong belief that negative water-related experiences can leave lasting impressions on children, potentially leading to the development of hydrophobia.

Interestingly, there is a discrepancy in the responses regarding lack of life experience to understand that big bodies of water might not be as foreboding as they appear. While 25% of respondents hold this belief, it is possible that some parents are attempting to rationalize their child's fear by attributing it to a lack of exposure or understanding rather than innate causes.



The perception that water is a scary unknown, trapping children with no way out, is shared by 25% of respondents. This aligns with the notion that water environments can evoke feelings of entrapment and insecurity in young swimmers, contributing to their fear.

Loss of control in water environments is a significant factor, with 66.67% of parents attributing hydrophobia to this cause. This finding underscores the importance of feeling secure and in control during water activities, and the lack of control may exacerbate a child’s fear.

It is notable that sensory processing issues and discomfort caused by water in the nose or eyes are cited by a smaller percentage of respondents (8.33% and 16.67%, respectively). These responses suggest that sensory sensitivities can contribute to water-related fears, highlighting the need to consider individual sensory experiences when addressing hydrophobia.

These responses highlight the multifaceted nature of hydrophobia. The mysteriousness and potential dangers of water, coupled with negative experiences, can play a significant role in its development. Addressing these perceptions through gradual immersion, fun equipment, and one-on-one swim lessons, among other strategies, may help alleviate hydrophobia and create a positive water experience for young swimmers. Additionally, recognizing the impact of sensory processing issues and loss of control underscores the need for personalized approaches to build confidence and comfort in water environments. (Fig. 55)

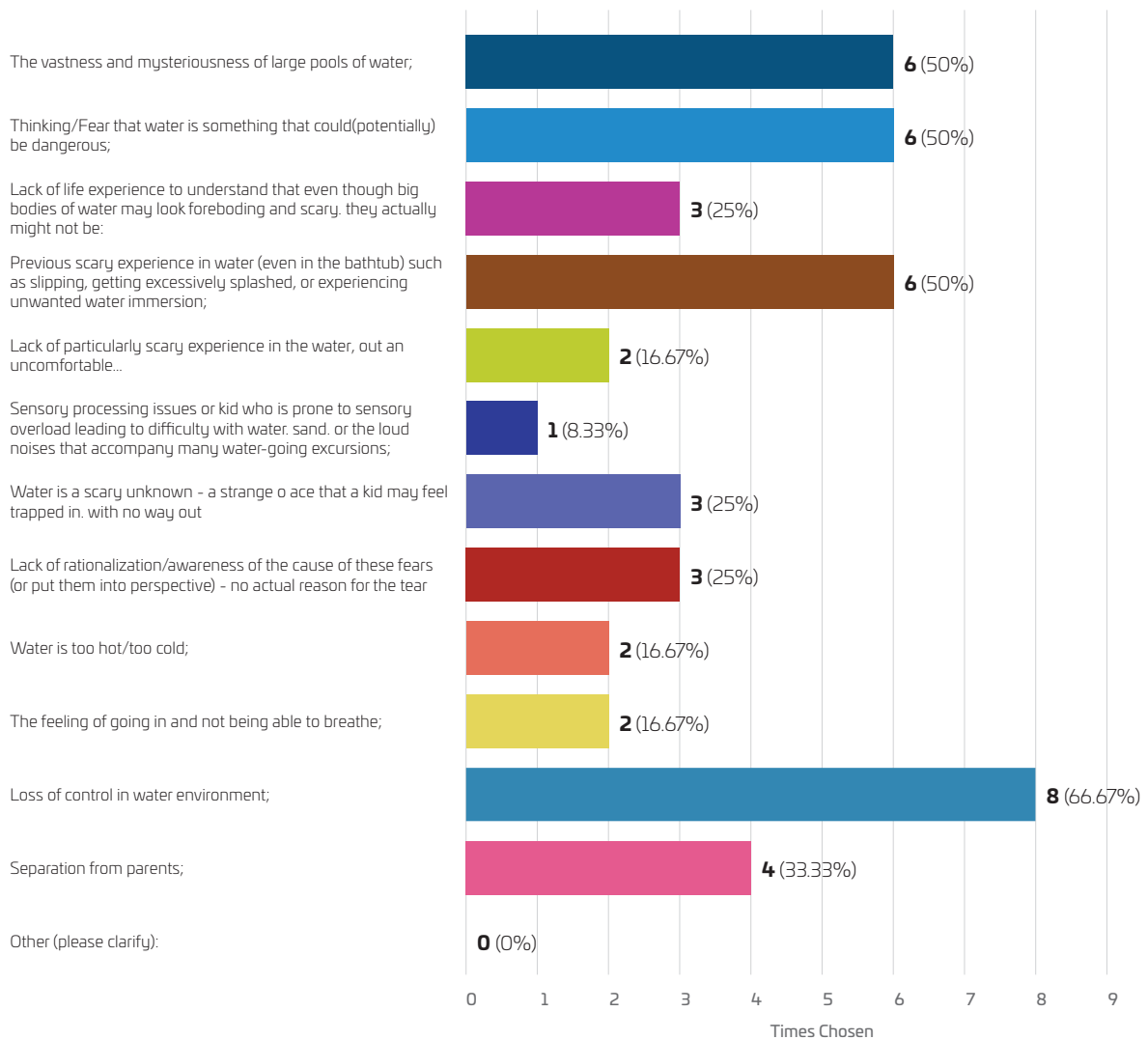


Figure 55. What do you think causes hydrophobia in your kid?



Question 10. What do you think might help to reduce hydrophobia?

After analysing the data received from the respondents, we could see that respondents across all groups see significant potential in various approaches to reduce hydrophobia in children. Gradual immersion is endorsed by the majority of respondents overall (51.66%), with Bulgarian respondents showing a slightly higher agreement (54.94%). This strategy involves easing children into water environments slowly, allowing them to acclimate at their own pace and build confidence over time.

Fun equipment is also widely seen as beneficial, with 43.13% of respondents overall indicating its importance. Croatian respondents particularly value this approach (79.59%), suggesting that incorporating engaging and enjoyable equipment can help create positive associations with water-related activities.

One-on-one swim lessons are endorsed by a substantial portion of respondents overall (56.87%), and Bulgarian respondents emphasize their significance even more (50.62%). This approach highlights the effectiveness of personalized instruction to address individual fears and concerns.

“Get in With Them,” an approach involving parents or guardians participating alongside their children, is supported by 50.24% of respondents overall. This strategy promotes a sense of security and comfort, allowing children to see their trusted adults engaging in water activities.

Talking it out is perceived as helpful by 35.55% of respondents overall, with Bulgarian respondents also valuing open communication (38.89%). This approach emphasizes the importance of discussing fears and concerns, allowing children to express themselves and receive reassurance.

Seeking counselling from swimming experts or psychological support is endorsed by 31.75% of respondents overall. While Bulgarian respondents also acknowledge its value (28.4%), Croatian respondents particularly support this approach (42.86%). This highlights the role of professional guidance in addressing hydrophobia and creating tailored strategies.

These responses indicate a holistic and multifaceted approach to reducing hydrophobia. Gradual immersion, fun equipment, one-on-one lessons, and parental involvement all play significant roles. Effective communication and professional support are also key components in addressing children’s fears. The shared endorsements of these strategies underscore the importance of comprehensive and individualized approaches to help young swimmers overcome hydrophobia and develop positive associations with water activities.

The open respondents’ answers regarding what might help reduce hydrophobia shed light on a variety of practical and psychological strategies that they believe could be effective in addressing children’s fear of water.

Some suggest implementing swimming programs or schools specifically designed for non-swimmers. This approach highlights the need for specialized instruction to cater to children’s individual fears and needs, allowing them to develop confidence and skills gradually. Others emphasize the importance of water games and shallow pools, especially in settings like kindergartens, to introduce water activities in a playful and non-threatening manner. The idea of group activities is also mentioned, suggesting that being in a supportive and social environment can help children feel more at ease around water.

The provision of indoor swimming pools is a recurrent theme, particularly in smaller settlements where such facilities might be lacking. This notion underlines the significance of early exposure to water and the potential benefits of having accessible resources that encourage positive water experiences from an early age. Some responses highlight the importance of starting swimming lessons from infancy, emphasizing the benefits of early familiarity with water environments. Others stress the role of a skilled coach or instructor who can create a safe and supportive learning environment, building trust and confidence. One respondent suggests a gradual approach, where a child is allowed to stand in the pool with their feet in the water and is invited to enter at their own pace. This approach respects the child’s autonomy and aims to reduce anxiety associated with water activities.

Overall, these responses reflect a combination of practical measures, early exposure, individualized instruction, and supportive environments as potential solutions to reducing hydrophobia. The emphasis on gradual



exposure, skilled instruction, and positive associations with water activities aligns with established methods for helping children overcome their fear and develop a sense of comfort and confidence around water. (Fig. 56)

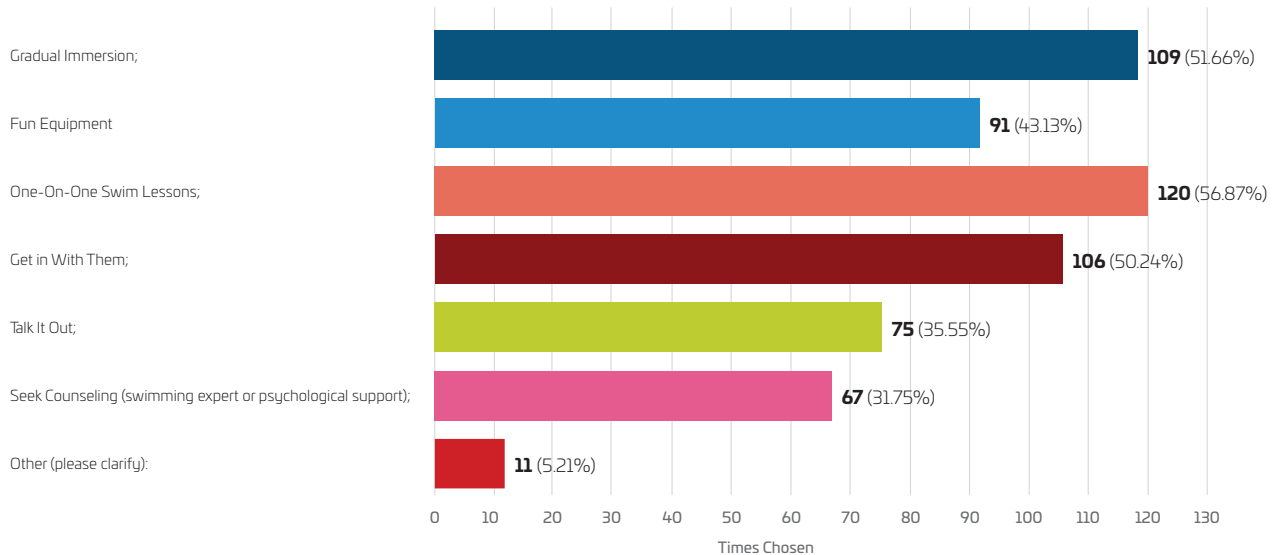


Figure 56. What do you think might help to reduce hydrophobia?

Question 11. How important do you find kids' hydrophobia?

The question of how important respondents find kids' hydrophobia reveals interesting insights into their perceptions of this issue. Overall, the data indicates that respondents generally recognize the significance of addressing and understanding children's fear of water.

The mean average importance rating across all respondents is approximately 37.47, indicating a moderate level of importance attributed to kids' hydrophobia. The relatively narrow range of standard deviations (2.07-72.87) suggests that the responses are relatively consistent, although there is variation in individual opinions. (Fig. 57)

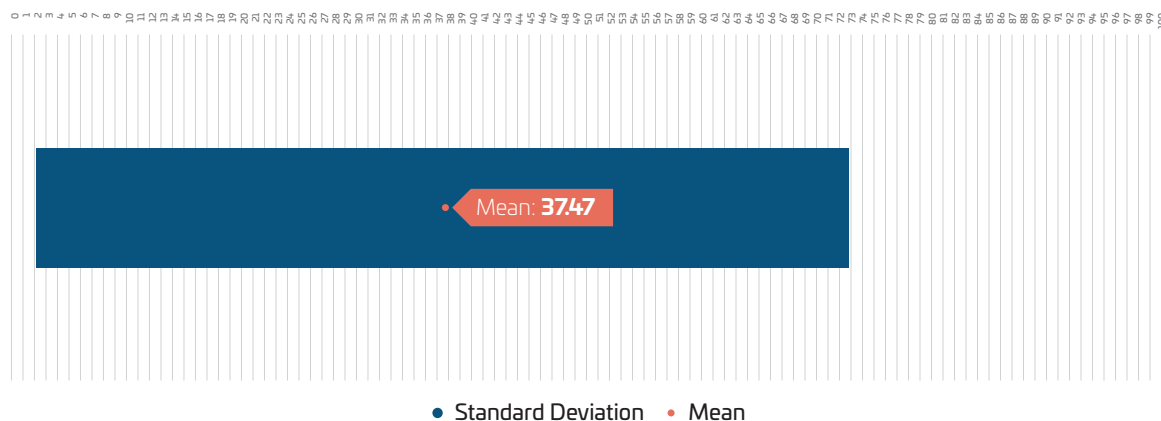


Figure 57. How important do you find kids' hydrophobia?

When examining the responses from Bulgarian participants, we observe a similar sentiment, with a mean average importance rating of 37.56. The standard deviation for Bulgarian respondents (4.32-70.80) also indicates a relatively consistent perception of the issue's importance. This suggests that among Bulgarian respondents, there is a shared understanding of the significance of addressing kids' hydrophobia.

In the case of Croatian participants, the mean average importance rating is slightly lower at 37.16. However, the standard deviation (4.97-79.29) still indicates a relatively consistent range of opinions. Despite the slight variation



in the mean average, the similarity in the standard deviations suggests that Croatian respondents also acknowledge the relevance of addressing kids' hydrophobia.

Collectively, the data indicates that respondents, regardless of their geographical location, share a generally moderate to high level of concern about kids' hydrophobia. The minor variations in mean average importance ratings among Bulgarian and Croatian respondents might be attributed to cultural or contextual factors. However, the consistent standard deviations suggest that respondents from both countries recognize the importance of addressing and managing kids' hydrophobia to ensure their well-being and positive experiences with water activities.

Question 12. What kind of help would you look for if you notice your kid has hydrophobia?

The responses to the question about the kind of help respondents would seek if they notice their child has hydrophobia shed light on their preferences and approaches to addressing this issue. Across all respondents, there is a notable emphasis on seeking assistance from child psychologists and swimming experts.

A substantial majority of respondents, 84.26%, express their intention to seek help from swimming experts if they notice their child has hydrophobia. This aligns with the understanding that swimming experts possess specialized knowledge and techniques to help children overcome their fear of water through guided and safe experiences.

Furthermore, 40.1% of respondents state that they would try to address the issue on their own, indicating a level of confidence and commitment from parents in helping their child overcome hydrophobia. This finding suggests that parents believe in their ability to play an active role in supporting their child's emotional growth and development.

Overall, 29.95% of respondents indicate that they would consider consulting child psychologists if they notice their child has hydrophobia. This suggests that a significant portion of respondents recognize the psychological aspect of hydrophobia and the potential benefits of professional psychological support.

Analysing the responses from Bulgarian participants, we observe similar trends. Child psychologists and swimming experts are the primary sources of help considered by Bulgarian respondents, with percentages close to the overall results.

Similarly, Croatian respondents also display a preference for seeking help from child psychologists and swimming experts. The percentages for these options among Croatian participants align closely with the overall findings.

The data demonstrates a shared recognition among respondents, regardless of their nationality, of the value of seeking professional help from child psychologists and swimming experts when dealing with a child's hydrophobia. The slight variations in percentages between Bulgarian and Croatian respondents suggest consistent perspectives on the importance of professional support in addressing this issue. (Fig. 58)

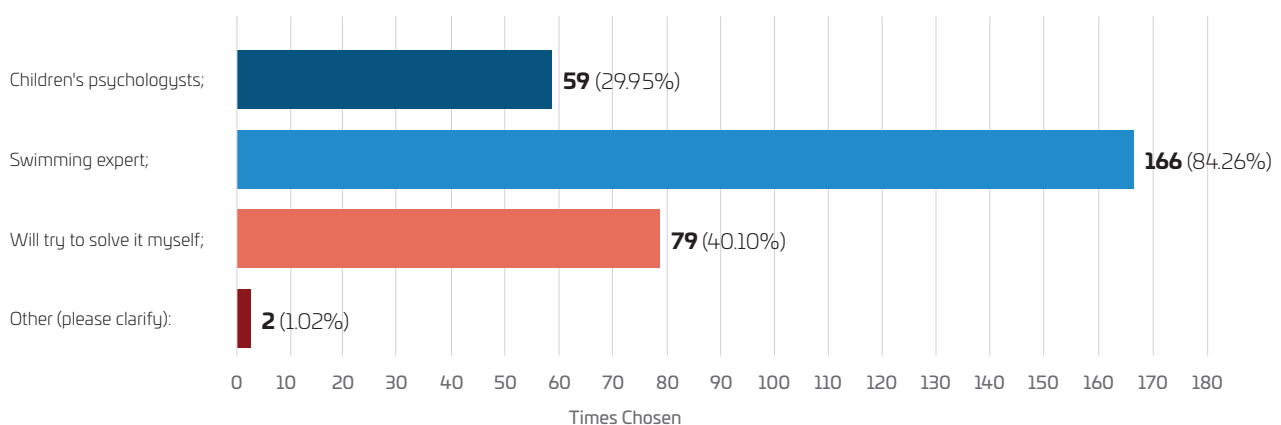


Figure 58. What kind of help would you look for if you notice your kid has hydrophobia?

Question 13. How important is the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia for you as a parent?

The responses to the question regarding how important respondents find kids' hydrophobia reveal varying perceptions and priorities across different groups of participants.

Overall, the mean importance level assigned to kids' hydrophobia is 58.64, with a standard deviation ranging from 18.81 to 98.47. This suggests a moderate level of significance attributed to the issue of hydrophobia in children among the entire group of respondents.

Analysing the responses from Bulgarian participants, we observe a slightly higher mean importance level of 64.21. The standard deviation in this case ranges from 27.90 to 100, indicating a wider variation in opinions among Bulgarian respondents. This could be due to differing cultural or personal factors that impact how hydrophobia is perceived in Bulgaria.

In contrast, Croatian respondents express a lower mean importance level of 40.71, accompanied by a relatively narrow standard deviation of 4.44 to 85.86. This suggests that the issue of kids' hydrophobia might be viewed as somewhat less significant among the Croatian participants compared to the overall average.

The main findings from these statistics reveal that there is variability in how respondents from different backgrounds perceive the importance of kids' hydrophobia. While the overall mean suggests a moderate level of importance, Bulgarian respondents seem to assign a higher level of importance, potentially influenced by unique cultural or contextual factors. On the other hand, Croatian respondents tend to attribute relatively less importance to the issue. These differences could stem from variations in cultural attitudes, experiences, and priorities related to children's hydrophobia within these specific regions. (Fig. 59)

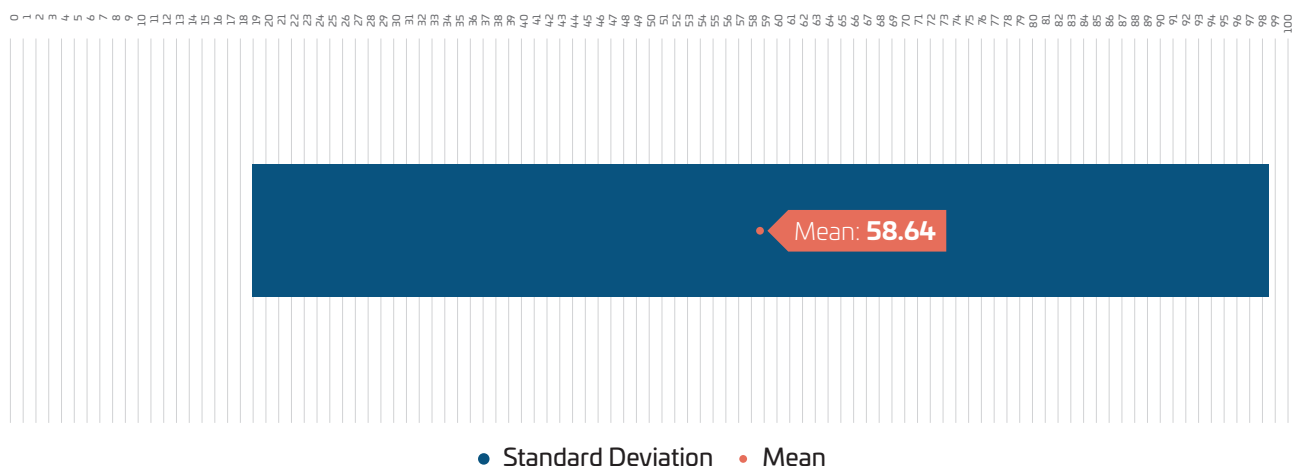


Figure 59. How important is the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia for you as a parent?

Question 14. Are you interested in the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia and willing to receive more information/practices?

The responses to the question about whether respondents are interested in the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia and their willingness to receive more information and practices show a range of attitudes and preferences among different groups of participants.

Looking at the overall statistics, it is evident that the responses are relatively evenly distributed among the three options. Of the total respondents, 35.29% express interest and willingness to receive more information and



practices to overcome kids' hydrophobia. On the other hand, 40.11% indicate that they are not interested in the topic, and 24.6% are unsure. (Fig. 60)

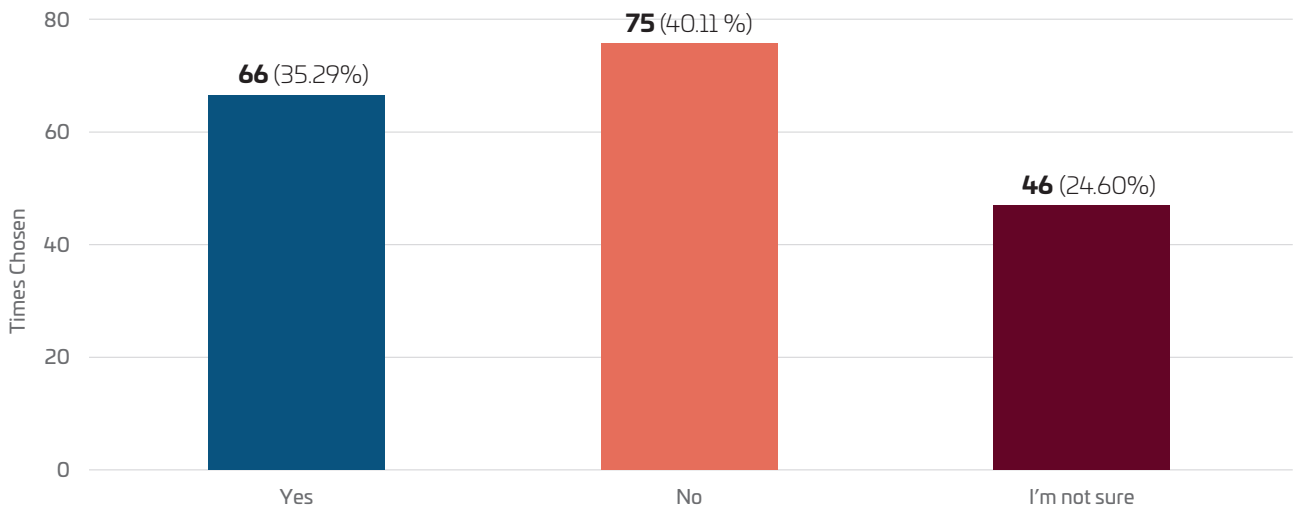


Figure 60. Are you interested in the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia and willing to receive more information/practices?

Breaking down the results by nationality, Bulgarian respondents demonstrate a lower level of interest, with only 21.13% expressing interest in receiving more information and practices to address kids' hydrophobia. Meanwhile, a significant 50% of Bulgarian participants state that they are not interested, and 28.87% are uncertain. (Fig. 61)

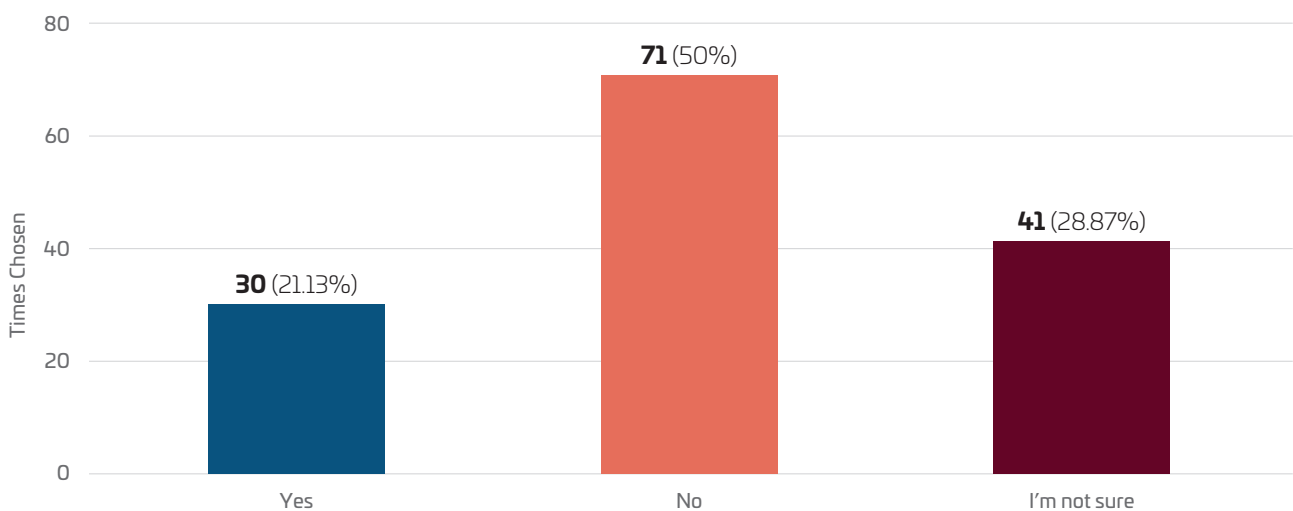


Figure 61. Are you interested in the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia and willing to receive more information/practices (Bulgaria)?

In contrast, Croatian respondents show a higher level of interest, with 80% expressing their willingness to receive more information and practices to overcome kids' hydrophobia. Only 8.89% say they are not interested, and 11.11% are unsure. (Fig. 62)

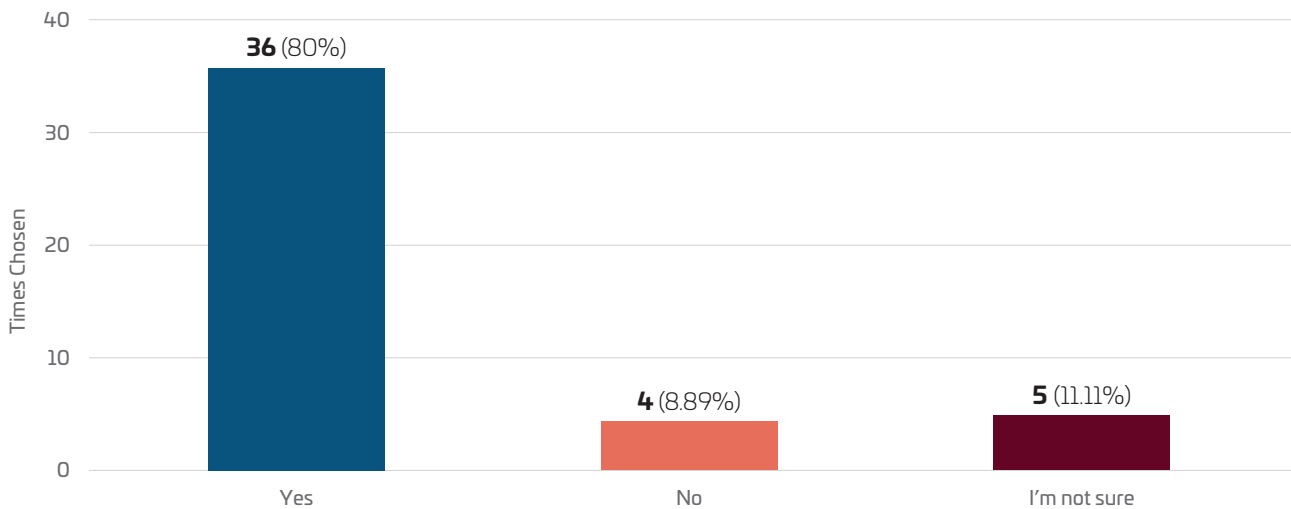


Figure 62. Are you interested in the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia and willing to receive more information/practices (Croatia)?

The main findings from these statistics indicate that there is variation in the level of interest and willingness to engage with the topic of overcoming kids' hydrophobia. While the overall distribution suggests a relatively balanced split among the three options, the differences between Bulgarian and Croatian respondents are notable. Bulgarian participants appear less interested and more uncertain, whereas Croatian participants show a higher degree of interest in receiving information and practices related to this topic. This could be attributed to varying cultural, societal, and contextual factors influencing the participants' attitudes and priorities.

Question 15. If you have any practical information and exercises of overcoming hydrophobia with your kids, would you be willing to try those exercises?

The data received of this question related to the inclination to engage with practical information and exercises aimed at mitigating hydrophobia in children reveal interesting insights, with some variations among different groups of respondents. In the overall statistics, a majority of participants, accounting for 56.52%, express a positive inclination toward trying practical information and exercises aimed at addressing their kids' hydrophobia. On the other hand, 26.63% of respondents indicate that they would not be willing to try these exercises, and 16.85% are unsure about their willingness. (Fig. 63)

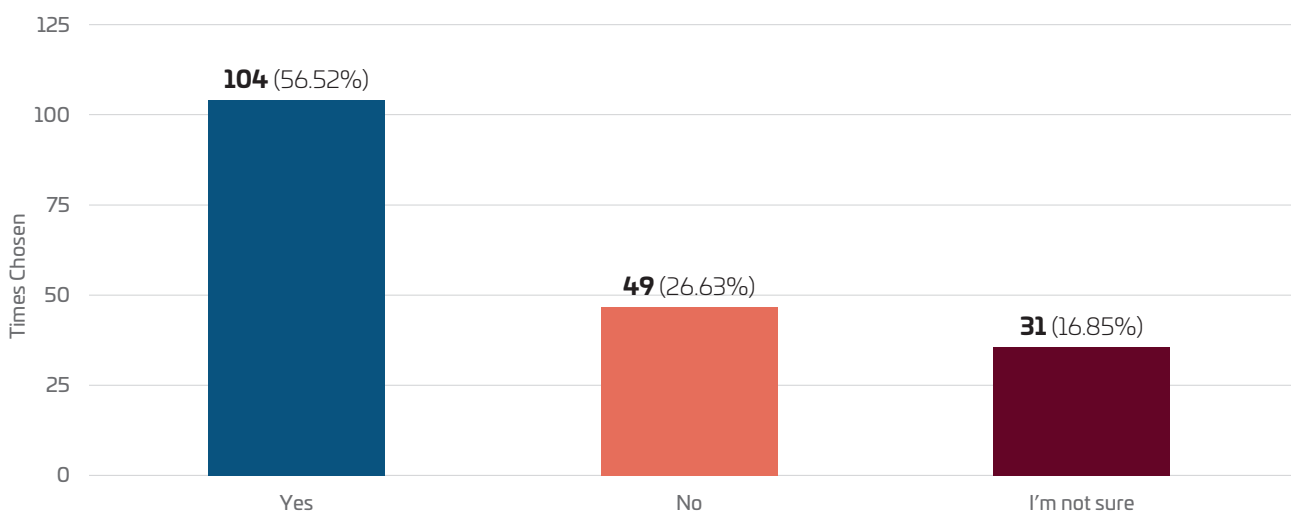


Figure 63. If you have any practical information and exercises of overcoming hydrophobia with your kids, would you be willing to try those exercises?



When looking at the breakdown by nationality, the Bulgarian respondents demonstrate a more reserved attitude. Among them, 45% state their willingness to try the practical information and exercises. A slightly higher percentage, 34.29%, express reluctance to try these methods, and 20.71% are uncertain. (Fig. 64)

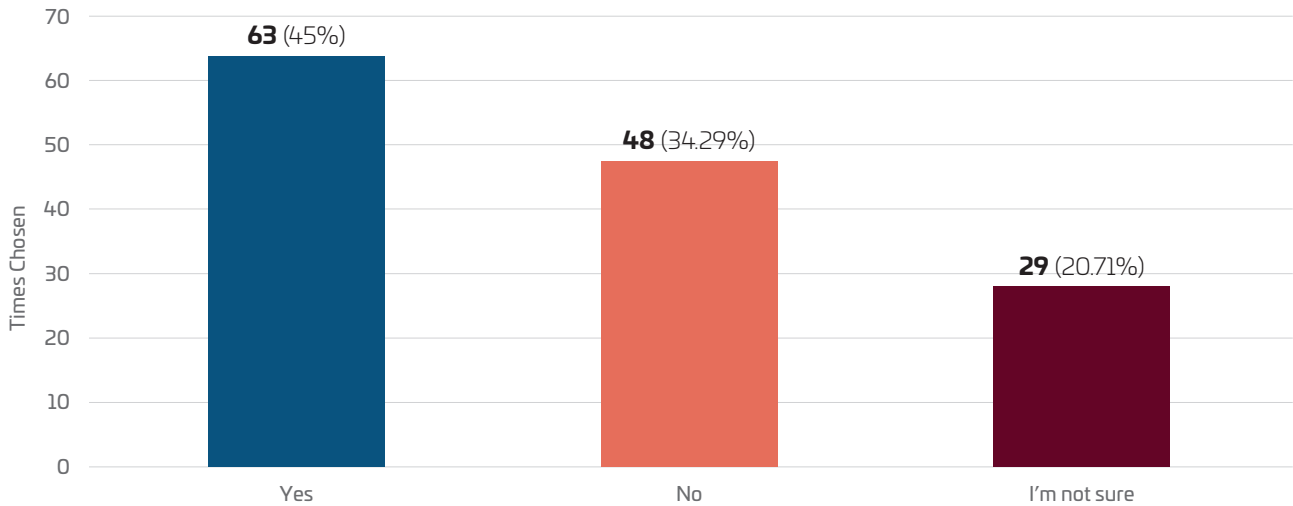


Figure 64. *If you have any practical information and exercises of overcoming hydrophobia with your kids, would you be willing to try those exercises (Bulgaria)?*

In contrast, the Croatian respondents exhibit a more enthusiastic response. A striking 93.18% of Croatian participants express their willingness to try the practical information and exercises to address their kids' hydrophobia. Merely 2.27% indicate that they would not be willing, and 4.55% are uncertain. (Fig. 65)

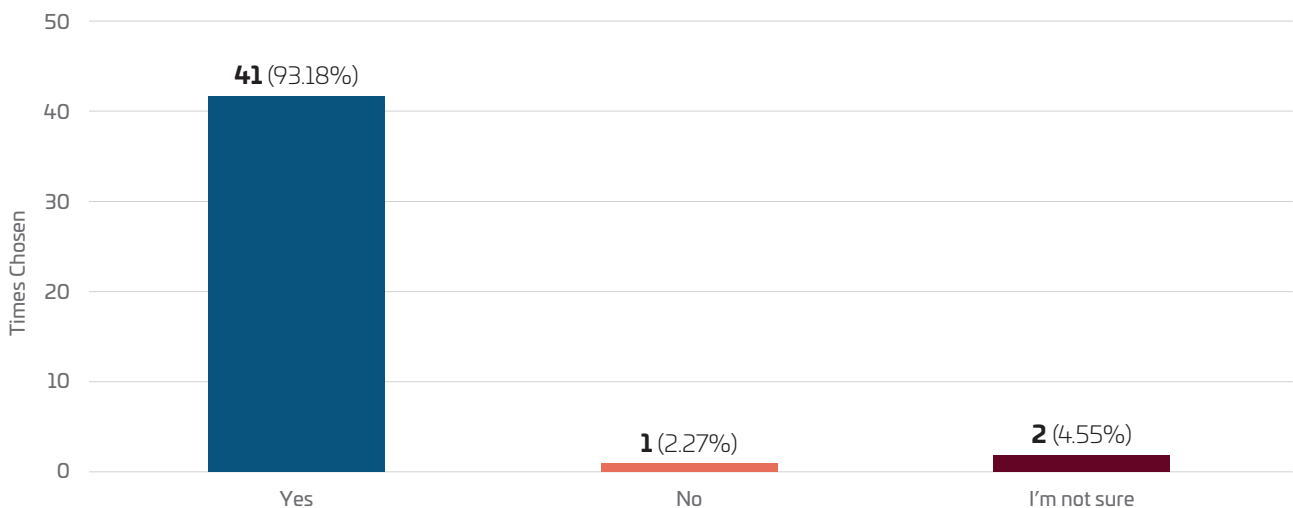


Figure 65. *If you have any practical information and exercises of overcoming hydrophobia with your kids, would you be willing to try those exercises (Croatia)?*

The main findings from these statistics highlight the varying attitudes and openness among respondents from different nationalities. While the overall statistics indicate that a majority of participants are open to trying the practical information and exercises, the differences between Bulgarian and Croatian respondents are notable. Bulgarian participants are more evenly split between willingness and reluctance, with a considerable portion being uncertain. On the other hand, Croatian participants show a significantly higher level of willingness, with only a small percentage expressing reluctance. These differences could be attributed to factors such as cultural norms, prior experiences, and personal beliefs, influencing the respondents' responses to the idea of trying practical exercises to address kids' hydrophobia.



Question 16. What would be the most convenient format for you to gain new information about hydrophobia?

The analysis of data received from respondents concerning the most suitable format for acquiring new information about hydrophobia unveils some crucial insights, marked by commonalities and divergences within different respondent groups.

In the overall context, the responses showcase a varied distribution across different formats. Brochures garnered a preference of 21.64%, indicating an interest in concise and easily accessible written materials. Handbooks, with 38.01%, emerged as a favoured option, suggesting a preference for comprehensive and structured resources. Video tutorials stood out with 52.05%, reflecting an inclination towards visual and interactive learning. Online learning courses gained traction with 30.41%, appealing to those who prefer self-paced, digital education. Formal learning courses obtained a response rate of 27.49%, highlighting an interest in structured educational programs. Podcasts resonated with 28.07%, indicating an audience that appreciates auditory learning experiences. A small fraction, 3.51%, expressed preference for other formats. (Fig. 66)

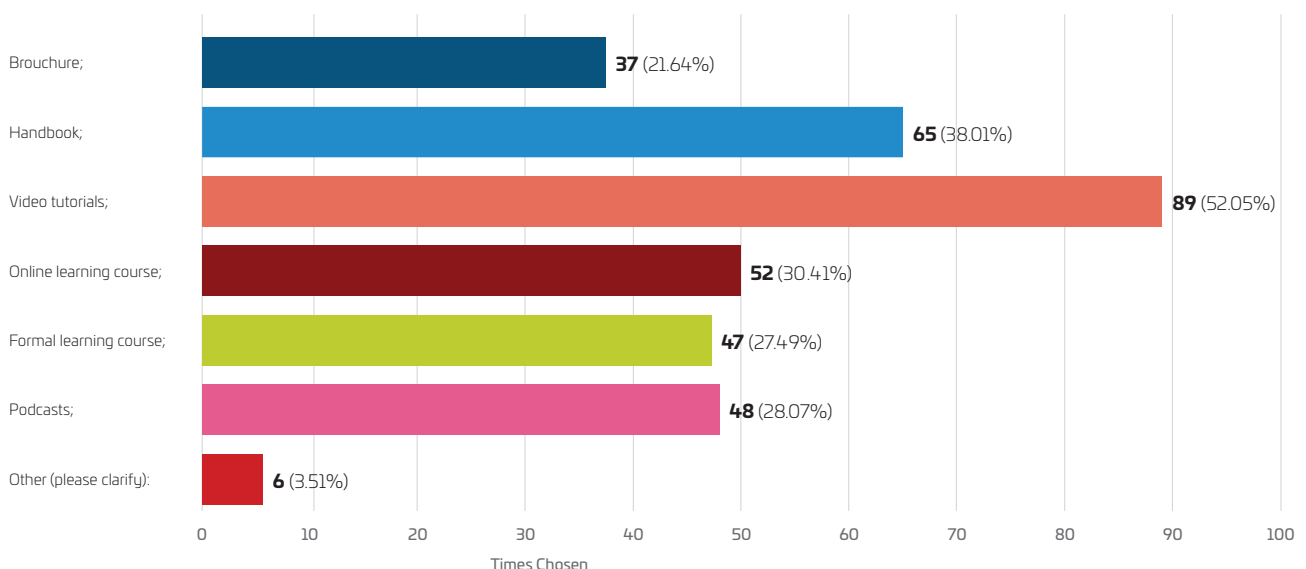


Figure 66. What would be the most convenient format for you to gain new information about hydrophobia?

In the Bulgarian context, the preference for brochures increased slightly to 28.13%, underlining the significance of concise written materials. Handbooks retained popularity at 28.91%, indicating the relevance of comprehensive guides. Video tutorials exhibited a strong preference at 51.56%, aligning with a preference for visual and interactive content. Online learning courses attracted 18.75%, showcasing interest in digital learning resources.



Formal learning courses were chosen by 14.06%, indicating a preference for structured curricula. Podcasts resonated with 21.88%, and a minority (3.91%) expressed preference for other formats. (Fig. 67)

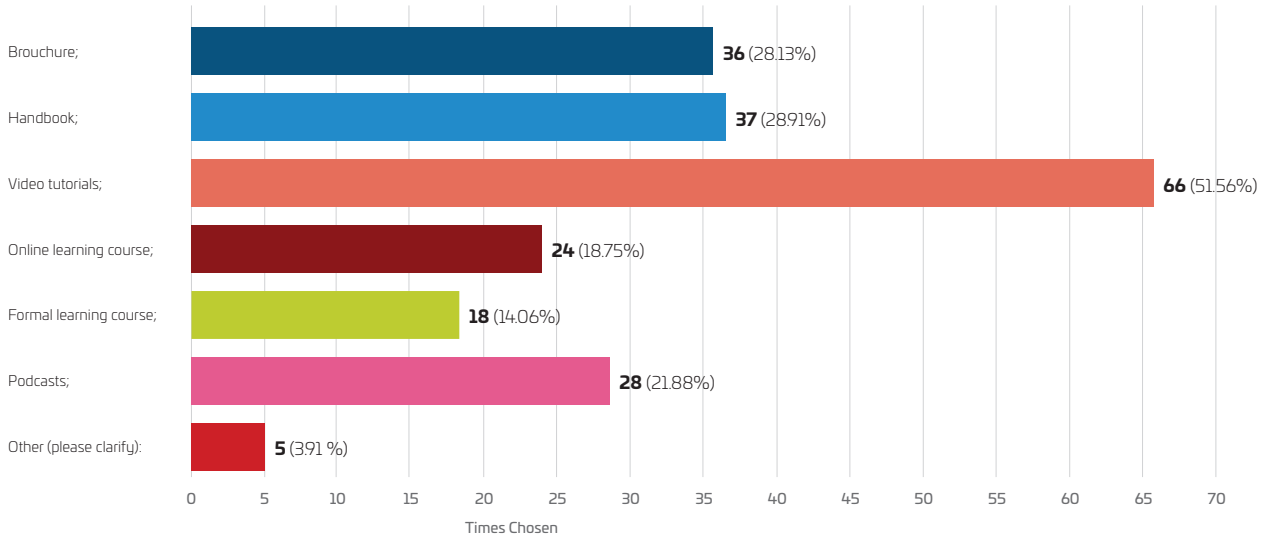


Figure 67. What would be the most convenient format for you to gain new information about hydrophobia (Bulgaria)?

Conversely, among Croatian respondents, brochures were selected by a mere 2.33%, suggesting minimal interest in this format. Handbooks were favoured by a significant 65.12%, pointing to a strong preference for detailed and structured resources. Video tutorials garnered 53.49%, resonating with those who prefer visual learning. Online learning courses and formal learning courses received similar rates of 65.12% and 67.44% respectively, underscoring a preference for structured, digitally delivered education. Podcasts were chosen by 46.51%, indicating an appreciation for auditory content. A minor 2.33% preferred other formats. (Fig. 68)

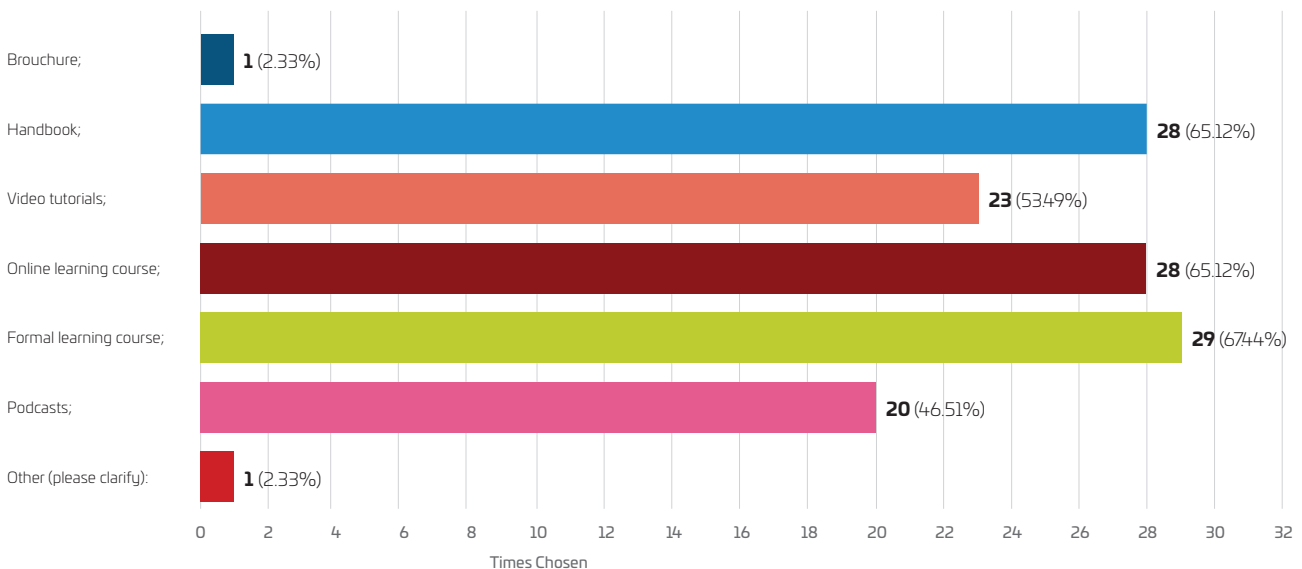


Figure 68. What would be the most convenient format for you to gain new information about hydrophobia (Croatia)?

The findings indicate that while video tutorials and handbooks consistently gained popularity across all respondent groups, the specific preferences for formats like brochures, online learning courses, and podcasts varied. Notably, the Croatian respondents demonstrated a distinctive affinity for handbooks and formal learning courses compared to the overall trend. These results underscore the importance of tailoring educational resources to meet the preferences of diverse audiences when addressing hydrophobia-related information dissemination.



CONCLUSIONS:

- Variability in hydrophobia perception: respondents' perceptions of hydrophobia's causes and significance vary, reflecting a multifaceted issue;
- Urban influence: respondent locations (capital, big city, small city, village) affect their perceptions, highlighting the urban-rural divide in hydrophobia-related concerns;
- Parental insights: involvement of both swimming coaches and parents is crucial for understanding and addressing hydrophobia in young swimmers;
- Hydrophobia prevalence: a significant portion of respondents reported their children having hydrophobia, indicating a prevalent concern;
- Swimming lessons: availability of swimming training influences hydrophobia prevalence, as children engaged in training exhibited varied perceptions;
- Importance of hydrophobia: respondents perceived hydrophobia as moderately important (mean score: 58.64), with variations based on nationality;
- Desire for information: respondents expressed varying interest in hydrophobia-related information, with Bulgarians exhibiting higher curiosity;
- Practical solutions: respondents across groups demonstrated willingness to try practical exercises to alleviate hydrophobia, showcasing the relevance of targeted interventions;
- Preferred learning formats: the favoured learning format for hydrophobia information varied, with video tutorials, handbooks, and formal learning courses emerging as top choices;
- Cultural differences: Bulgarian respondents leaned toward brochures and video tutorials, while Croatians preferred handbooks and formal learning courses;
- Influence of swimming environment: respondents' choice of water environment (natural vs. Artificial) impacted their perception of hydrophobia triggers;
- Experience matters: respondents' swimming experience in years played a role in their perception of hydrophobia's significance;
- Parental ability to swim: parents' swimming abilities influenced their children's involvement in swimming training and hydrophobia prevalence;
- Frequency of water sports: respondents' children's exposure to water sports varied widely, reflecting diverse opportunities in their surroundings;
- Hydrophobia reduction strategies: gradual immersion, fun equipment, one-on-one lessons, and parent involvement were preferred strategies to mitigate hydrophobia;
- Counselling importance: child psychologists and swimming experts were viewed as essential resources to address hydrophobia;
- Varying hydrophobia causes: respondents attributed hydrophobia to factors like water's vastness, potential danger, sensory issues, past experiences, and control loss;
- Nationality influences: Bulgarian respondents were more likely to attribute hydrophobia to fear of water's vastness compared to Croatians;
- Sensory considerations: sensory processing issues emerged as a contributing factor, emphasizing the importance of tailored interventions;
- Parental involvement: respondents highlighted the significance of communication and parental support in reducing hydrophobia, underlining the role of the family.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are designed to address the complex issue of kids' hydrophobia by focusing on collaboration, education, support, and customized strategies, ensuring a holistic approach to combating this fear.

- Should be developed educational materials targeting parents and swimming coaches to raise awareness about hydrophobia, its causes, and effective interventions;
- Should be fostered open communication between parents and swimming coaches to collectively address and manage hydrophobia in young swimmers;
- Encouragement is needed for parents to introduce their children to water activities from a young age to acclimatize them to aquatic environments and reduce fear;
- Promotion of gradual immersion strategies are required, allowing kids to become comfortable with water step by step, mitigating the overwhelming feeling;
- Should be incorporated enjoyable and confidence-boosting water-related equipment to make aquatic experiences more positive and engaging;
- Should be offered personalized swim lessons to address individual fears and provide tailored guidance, enhancing comfort and trust;
- Parents should be encouraged to join their children in water activities, demonstrating a supportive and safe environment, which can reduce apprehension;
- Collaboration with child psychologists and swimming experts is encouraged to provide specialized interventions for children with sensory or emotional challenges;
- Should be ensured swimming facilities prioritize safety measures, offering children a controlled environment to alleviate concerns about danger;
- Should be employed experienced and empathetic swimming instructors who can understand and address the unique needs of hydrophobic children.
- Should be maintained water temperatures suitable for children's comfort, avoiding extremes that could contribute to discomfort;
- Parents should be encouraged to improve their swimming skills, enhancing their confidence to engage in water activities with their children;
- Should be organized group water activities where children can interact with peers, promoting a supportive atmosphere to conquer fears together;
- Should be explored hydrotherapy sessions as an effective approach for children with sensory processing issues to overcome their hydrophobia;
- It is recommendable to establish community centres with indoor swimming facilities in areas lacking such amenities, ensuring widespread access to water-based activities;
- Should be conducted more workshops for parents and swimming coaches, providing them with practical techniques to handle hydrophobic children effectively;
- Should be developed online courses, video tutorials, and handbooks to disseminate knowledge on hydrophobia and strategies for its management;



- Should be created support groups where parents can share experiences and insights, fostering a sense of community and mutual assistance;
- Collaboration with schools is encouraged to integrate water-related activities into curricula, providing structured exposure to water from a young age;
- Should be conducted ongoing researches to understand evolving factors causing hydrophobia and to develop innovative solutions tailored to different contexts.





TIPS AND TRICKS HOW TO MANAGE HYDROPHOBIA IN EARLY AGE

Understanding Hydrophobia:

Hydrophobia, the fear of water, is a common challenge young children might face. It's important to recognize that this fear is a natural response, often arising from unfamiliarity, past negative experiences, or imaginative worries. By understanding the roots of hydrophobia, parents and coaches can provide tailored support to guide children through this phase. Recognizing how hydrophobia might impact a child's development emphasizes the need for timely intervention to ensure they don't miss out on the joy and benefits of water activities.

Creating a Positive Water Environment:

Establishing a positive and safe water environment is pivotal in helping children overcome hydrophobia. A nurturing atmosphere builds trust, encouraging children to gradually approach water-related activities. Choosing the right swimming location, be it a shallow pool or calm natural setting, can ease apprehension. Equally important is providing appropriate swimming gear that fits comfortably and promotes a sense of security. By creating a supportive backdrop, parents and coaches lay the foundation for children to embrace water with confidence and excitement.

Gradual Exposure to Water:

Introducing water play gradually is key to managing hydrophobia. Starting with non-threatening activities like water play in a controlled environment lets children dip their toes at their own pace. This gradual approach enables them to build positive associations with water while gaining a sense of accomplishment with each step. Age-appropriate water activities and games further fuel their curiosity, making the journey from fear to fascination an exciting adventure.

Building Trust and Confidence:

Parents and coaches play a vital role in nurturing trust and confidence. Effective communication, understanding fears, and providing gentle encouragement help children feel supported. Positive reinforcement techniques, such as praising efforts and celebrating small victories, boost their self-esteem. By being patient and understanding, adults become partners in the child's journey towards water confidence.

Overcoming Challenges:

Setbacks and challenges are part of any journey, and addressing them with resilience is essential. When children face fear or anxiety, acknowledge their emotions and offer reassurance. Equipping them with strategies to handle challenges empowers them to overcome their fears. The journey might require time, but the key is to remain patient and persistent, highlighting the importance of facing fears with unwavering determination.

Professional Guidance and Support:

When hydrophobia persists, seeking professional help is a proactive step. Child psychologists and therapists specializing in childhood fears can provide valuable insights and strategies tailored to each child's needs. Collaborating with experienced swimming instructors skilled in teaching young children ensures that lessons are delivered in a way that fosters comfort and progress, turning hydrophobia into a thing of the past.

Fun and Play in the Water:

Infusing fun and play into water activities transforms what was once a source of fear into a realm of joy. Engaging games, splashes, and laughter replace apprehension, creating cherished memories. Cultivating a positive attitude towards water not only promotes relaxation and enjoyment but also sets the stage for a lifelong love of water-based activities.



Safety Precautions:

While nurturing a positive water experience, safety remains paramount. Ensuring water safety at all times, including vigilant supervision, is crucial to prevent accidents. Teaching children basic water safety rules empowers them with the knowledge to navigate water environments with confidence and awareness.

Celebrating Progress and Achievements:

Each step forward is worth celebrating. Recognizing even the smallest victories and milestones reinforces a child's sense of accomplishment. Acknowledging their bravery and efforts encourages them to continue embracing water-related activities, fostering a sense of pride and motivation to further conquer their fears.

Transitioning to Formal Swim Lessons:

As children overcome hydrophobia, they might express interest in formal swim lessons. Recognizing when they're ready and choosing a qualified instructor and suitable program ensures a smooth transition. Proper guidance during this phase further solidifies their newfound confidence and sets the stage for a future filled with aquatic adventures.



CONCLUSIONS

In the journey from hydrophobia to water confidence, parents and coaches are the guiding lights, illuminating the path towards a brighter and more adventurous future. Your unwavering support, patience, and understanding are the building blocks of a child's triumphant journey. Remember, every splash, every smile, and every conquered fear are precious milestones, shaping a child's perception of water and their own capabilities.

As parents and coaches, you hold the power to transform fear into fascination, hesitation into excitement, and caution into courage. By nurturing a positive water environment, encouraging gradual exposure, and celebrating achievements, you sow the seeds of self-assurance that will flourish for a lifetime. Your dedication in creating a safe space for exploration and growth paves the way for children to embrace water with open arms and hearts.

Through your guidance, children not only conquer hydrophobia but also learn the profound life lesson that challenges can be overcome with love, patience, and unwavering support. As they dip their toes into new horizons, let your encouragement and belief in their potential be the waves that carry them towards a future where they navigate water, and life itself, with confidence, joy, and boundless enthusiasm.



#SWIM – SWIM WITHOUT FEAR TOOLS

#SWIM Without Fear book for kids

#SWIM Without Fear” is a delightful and engaging children’s book designed to transform hydrophobia into hydrophilia – a love for water! Geared towards children aged 4-6 years old, this book provides a captivating and reassuring journey to conquer water fears. Through fun-filled activities, young adventurers will learn to embrace the waves with courage, guided by parents, guardians, or coaches.

#SWIM Without Fear” is a heartwarming companion for young adventurers and their guiding stars – parents, guardians, or coaches. It encourages them to embark on a journey of conquering fears together, nurturing a positive relationship with water, and discovering the boundless joy that comes from diving into new experiences with courage and enthusiasm.

Dive into the pages of this book and let the water adventures begin – download at www.myswim.org

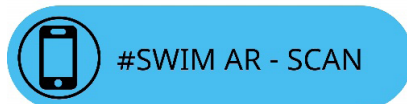
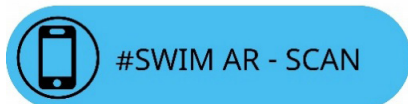
#SWIM Without Fear Augmented reality

The #SWIM - Swim Without Fear application is a groundbreaking tool designed to help children overcome hydrophobia by merging the real world with a virtual aquatic wonderland. This innovative app (available both for Android and Iphone) offers an immersive and engaging experience, using augmented reality to transform the way young minds perceive water. By simply scanning the source image, through the app, children unlock a world of interactive game and water-themed adventure right in their own environment.

#SWIM empowers children to confront their fear of water in a safe and controlled manner, turning apprehension into excitement and hesitation into curiosity. With each playful interaction, the app nurtures confidence, building a positive association with water and fostering a lasting love for aquatic activities. #SWIM isn’t just an application: it’s a bridge that connects imagination, technology, and personal growth, enabling children to dive into a world of fun and learning, all while conquering their fears.

Install the Augmented Reality app **#SWIM - Swim Without Fear**. Run the experience by following the steps below:

1. Install the app on your device (QR code below);
2. Open the **#SWIM** app and point your phone at the image in this news story;
3. Enjoy the experience and let’s swim together without fear.



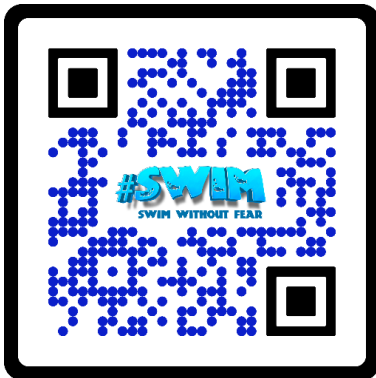


#SWIM Without Fear song

Dive into a world of aquatic excitement and laughter with the enchanting song “#SWIM - Swim Without Fear.” This lively and catchy tune is specifically crafted to ignite the spirit of fun and exploration in young hearts when it comes to water activities. The song’s vibrant lyrics and cheerful melody take kids on an imaginative journey, inviting them to discover the joy that water holds. Through playful verses and an infectious chorus, “#SWIM - Swim Without Fear” empowers kids to shed their worries, dip their toes into the water, and embrace the waves with open arms.

“#SWIM - Swim Without Fear” is more than just a song: it’s an anthem of courage and joy. Whether at the poolside, by the seaside, or even in the comfort of their own homes, kids are encouraged to sing along, dance, and immerse themselves in the enchanting world of water. Through this musical journey, children are invited to celebrate the boundless wonders of aquatic play, turning every moment in the water into a treasure trove of happiness and unforgettable experiences.

So, grab your swimsuits, gather your friends, and let the spirit of #SWIM fill the air as you embark on a journey of water-filled fun and fearless exploration!



#SWIM Videos

Unlock the potential of conquering hydrophobia with practical videos found in the extensive #SWIM - Swim Without Fear YouTube playlist, a comprehensive resource empowering parents and coaches to confidently employ new tools in overcoming children’s fear of water and fostering a joyful relationship with aquatic activities.





DISCLAIMER AND AUTHORS

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