Seeing the sea from land: a project to increase the public awareness of recreation waters quality. Results of a pilot questionnaire

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QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT KNOWLEDGE, RISK PERCEPTION AND BEHAVIORS RELATED TO BATHING WATERS QUALITY

180 people visiting beaches of the northern coastal area of Tuscany were interviewed during the bathing season 2005.

30 questions questionnaire:
✓ age class and area of residence
✓ bathing habits
✓ sources of information on water quality
✓ knowledge about the meaning of microbial parameters
✓ risk perception
✓ health problems possibly related to bathing
AGE DISTRIBUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>10-20</td>
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<td>70-80</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>80-90</td>
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RESIDENCE

- Resident: 53%
- Tourist: 47%
Would you like to receive information on water quality?

Bathing Habits

Are you concerned about the water quality?

Would you like to receive information on water quality?

In your bathing site are these information visible?

Do you read them?

Do you understand them?
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON WATER QUALITY

- Mass media
- Env. organizations (like Blu Flag)
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Local Health Authorities
- Tourism Promotion Agency
- Bathing establishments managers

real (on 109) preferred (on 180)
PERCEPTION OF WATER QUALITY

If you do not bathe, which is the most important reason?

- Negative informations by mass media: 18%
- Evidently dirty water: 30%
- Too many bathers: 13%
- Too cold water: 9%
- Other: 1%
- Not answer: 3%

Which elements do you consider to assess the bathing water quality?

- Water aspect (turbidity, floating objects, etc..): 34%
- Presence of fishes or other water organisms (jellyfishes, shellfishes, algae, etc..): 8%
- Water analysis results: 3%
- Other: 55%
What “Presence of Coliforms” does it mean?

What “Presence of Enterococci” does it mean?

Have you ever seen people bathing in suspected water?

Have you ever seen people bathing in interdicted areas?

Have you ever seen advices of bathing prohibition?

Do you ignore advices of bathing prohibition?
Have you ever had health problems possibly related to bathing?

Do you think that bathing polluted water could damage your health?

Do you choose bathing areas according to water quality?

In which part of your body?

Skin
Eyes
Troath
Intestine

Risk perception related to water quality
✓ The surveyed population showed a low level of information, knowledge and risk perception related to the quality of bathing waters.
✓ The majority of interviewed people don't choose destination on the basis of monitoring data, that are however not completely visible and understandable.
✓ Then it is evident the need of a better information of the public for the active participation of the local population and of beach visitors in the health protection and in the management of recreational water use areas.
✓ This implies that the institutions involved in monitoring and risk management should ensure good quality, readily understandable and easily accessible information.

CONCLUSIONS

Toscana
un mare di qualità

difendiamolo insieme!
Tuscany
a sea of quality
protect it together!