

While online publications like **Kidspot**, do provide a lot of valuable, general, balanced advice to parents on a range of subjects, a recent article in Kidspot (“ I’m a nurse and mom and this is what you need to know about anti-choking devices”), advising parents that the LifeVac airway clearance device is completely ineffective and recommending against its use; was unequivocally and provably, wrong!

As a father, grandfather, former advanced care paramedic (15 years), and current clinical educator of thousands of doctors and nurses for more than 25 years, and someone who has specifically studied the science of choking for more than 30 years, this is what you actually need to know about the LifeVac.

The advice in **Kidspot** concerning LifeVac was based on some very poor assumptions by the author; made from a single and very flawed and biased study and a misrepresentation of the medical device regulation and approval process; thus, representing a malignant lack of balance and profound ignorance. The author of this **Kidspot** editorial, although representing themselves as an “expert”, clearly lacks sufficient knowledge and understanding of the analysis and interpretation of scientific literature, medical device regulation and the scientific evidence around choking. The unevidenced advice/opinions, and misleading statements published by **Kidspot** (without any fact checking or appropriate review), we believe, have in fact placed thousands of Australian families at risk of death and serious harm by placing unqualified and unnecessary doubt in the minds of parents about the effectiveness of the LifeVac device (a TGA clinically reviewed and listed medical device).

The truth is, that, unlike first-aid measures, there are NO reports of any failure or harm in over 1300 saves using the LifeVac (including over 800 children, including in Australia) ... not one, and all after first aid has failed. This fact, (acknowledged by the TGA and every medical device regulator in the world) was a deliberate omission from the cited “evidence” and destroys any logic to the author’s and the study’s assertions. In this digital age, it is easy to assume that reputable sources of information are vetted and based on facts, are balanced, evidenced, and represent real expert opinion, however in this case this is clearly and emphatically not the case. Even after providing a detailed, evidenced analysis of the flawed study, the incorrect advice, and the significant ignorance of the author of this opinion piece; **Kidspot** has chosen to ignore facts, science, and actual evidence, and breach its own editorial code of conduct, and continue to place thousands of readers and their children at risk with this erroneous and irresponsible advice. No attempt was or has ever been made by **Kidspot** to validate the advice and claims made by the contributing “expert” and one can only assume that other advice also goes unchecked. This behaviour and lack of rigor should be very concerning for parents and readers of this publication, and a warning for others seeking advice from an expert in any online publications, blogs, podcasts, television segments, or training sessions conducted by those with only a limited understanding of a subject.

Parents should be able to trust their sources of advice, especially when it involves the safety of their children, however, this example has shown that having a media profile does not make you an expert in all subjects nor a reputable source of accurate, safe, or evidenced-based information. Without the necessary fact-checking and appropriate journalistic review prior to publication, the advice can be so flawed as to actually place children and families at risk.

### **LifeVac Australia**

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