

# Development and Assessment of Evaluation Indicators for Swimming Pool Accessibility

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**Background and Purpose:** Many studies have shown that swimming is beneficial for people with disabilities and the elderly. However, thus far, it seems to have been no studies on swimming pool accessibility. The purpose of the present study, therefore, was to establish the first instrument measuring swimming pool accessibility and to take physical examination on swimming pools in Kaohsiung city as a sample to realize the current accessible level. **Methods:** A self-designed checklist revised through expert validation and a pilot study was used to examine the accessible level of swimming pools. By a comprehensive review of regulations of barrier-free environment and other related literatures, evaluation indicators in the checklist were based on four priorities as accessibility examination and improvement, and the graded scales in the checklist were classified according to a variety of levels and different types of impairments. Fourteen government-based swimming pools and eight privately owned and operated swimming pools in Kaohsiung city were investigated with the convenient sampling method. **Results:** The findings indicated that government-based swimming pools have better performances on the total accessibility levels than privately operated swimming pools in Kaohsiung city, especially among those basic architectural facilities such as toilets, fitting rooms and shower rooms. Nevertheless, both governmental and private swimming pools have a severe deficiency in the swim-specific assistant facilities. **Conclusions:** The self-designed checklist in the present study was more effective in reflecting the accessibility of swimming pools and can be used as a reference for further analysis and modification. Moreover, to provide a greater accessible and safer barrier-free environment, there is an urgent need to improve swim-specific assistant facilities, such as the assistant entry into the water and aquatic facilitators. (FJPT 2009;34(1):1-8)

**Key Words:** Barrier-free environment, People with disabilities, Elderly, Swimming pools

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