

Pools and spas in Bavaria during the COVID pandemic

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Water (head); Federal Committee for Drinking Water (head); WHO Expert Group for Water Guidelines; German Standardization Committee for Swimming Pool Water Treatment; WG "Hospital waste water" of the German Water Association; Association of German Engineers Technical Committee „ooling towers“; Federal WG on Management of Chemical and Microbiological Drinking Water Problems.

Presentation Abstract

In January 2020 it became obvious that there was a problem with SARS-CoV-2 in Bavaria, as the first German cases were found in a company located in the outskirts of Munich. The Federal Scientific Pool Water Committee assessed the risks that could arise for visitors and employees and issued a statement to that end. The risk in the pool water itself was considered to be low, the risk was seen more in the pool environment. The Bavarian Ministry of Health was advised accordingly. During the first lock down all public pools were closed and it took quite some time until they were reopened again. Especially the large leisure pools, but also the spas exerted considerable pressure on the politicians to reopen the baths early.

The pools were reopened stepwise, allowing the use of outdoor pools first. Even when all the pools had reopened, swimming lessons were still forbidden for a while in order to

minimise direct contact. We were informed about two cases, where pool visitors had been tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. Fortunately, they did not have closer contact with others, so that they did not have to be classified as contact persons in the strict sense according to the German guidelines. However, health officials had major problems in verifying and enforcing compliance with the distance regulations.