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Computer alert saves drowning girl in U.K.

A 10-year-old girl was saved from drowning by a computer system designed to raise the alarm when swimmers get into difficulties in U.K.

The girl, from Rochdale, was at the deep end of the pool in Bangor, north Wales, when she sank to the bottom. The £65,000 system, called Poseidon, detected her on the pool floor and sounded the alarm. A lifeguard pulled her out and she recovered in hospital.

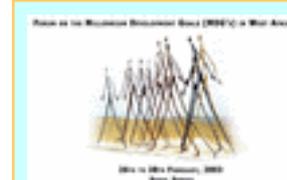
One of the safety system's four underwater cameras showed her sinking without any sign of a struggle into the 12ft 6in deep end. Once she had lain motionless on the pool floor for three seconds, the computer sounded an alarm, which also pinpointed which part of the pool the girl was in to the five lifeguards on duty.

Gwynedd County Council leisure officer Brian Evans said: "We

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feel as though the system has saved this little girl's life. He said the computer identified the girl as being in distress within 10 seconds of her slipping under the water. From beginning to end, the alert took just one minute and 27 seconds.

"The lifeguards would have seen her but perhaps not within 10 seconds. That's the critical thing. A lifeguard could have taken a minute, maybe two, maybe three minutes. We can't say."

The girl was pulled unconscious from the water and given life-saving treatment at the poolside. "This is the first time we've had to use it in the two years it has been installed. Everything worked according to plan."

The Poseidon system, which uses a matrix of underwater and overhead cameras, is installed at eight swimming pools in the UK.

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