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The Role of Librarians and Informationists in Disaster Response

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WHY A LIBRARIAN?





The National Library of Medicine (NLM) Disaster Information Management Research Center (DIMRC) website provides a wealth of resources for disaster planning, deployment and reporting. Librarians can play a valuable role in training responders in use of tools such as WISER, CHEMM and REMM.



Librarian participation at medical tent, Bataan Memorial Death March, White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico

NLM GRANT AND ON-LINE RESOURCES

The authors were awarded an NLM grant³ in September of 2011. The grant supports the informationist role for librarians within disaster response teams and agencies, and awareness of the NLM's disaster medicine on-line resources.

| Icon | Mobile Access | Description |
|--|---|--|
|  | WISER iPhone Android BlackBerry Web App 3048502326 | WISER (Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders) from the National Library of Medicine assists first responders in Hazmat incidents, with features including substance identification support, containment and suppression advice, and medical treatment information. |
|  | REMM iPhone Android Mobile Web | REMM (Radiation Emergency Medical Management) from the National Library of Medicine provides guidance about clinical diagnosis and treatment of radiation injuries during radiological and nuclear emergencies. |
|  | MedlinePlus Mobile Web | MedlinePlus , mobile enhanced web page from the National Library of Medicine provides access to consumer-oriented health information on disaster topics in English and Spanish. |
|  | PubMed Mobile Web Published for handhelds | PubMed Mobile from the National Library of Medicine provides access to more than 21 million citations for biomedical literature from MEDLINE, life science journals, and online books. |

<http://disaster.nlm.nih.gov/>

FOCUS GROUPS

Investigators met with New Mexico Disaster Medicine Assistance Team (DMAT-1-NM) and university emergency management personnel to discuss their information-seeking activities pre-, during, and post-deployment. Participants stressed the need for readily available, concise and current information.

The NLM disaster information management tools

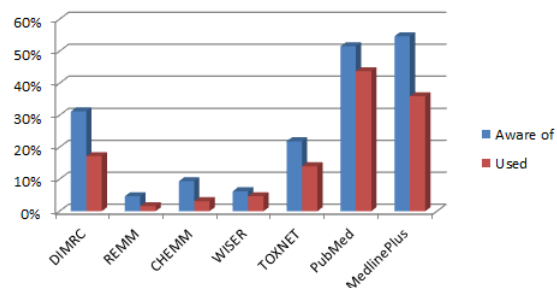
- Are freely available to anyone via the Internet
- Are concise and current
- Many of the tools can be downloaded for use in locations without Internet access
- Many can be accessed with mobile devices.

Pre-tests indicated some, but not widespread awareness and use of the NLM disaster response website and tools.

SURVEY

Investigators surveyed local and federal disaster responders on their information needs and awareness of NLM tools.

First responders' awareness of NLM tools



Class on NLM Resources for Disaster Volunteers Training Summit

EDUCATION

Librarians taught four breakout sessions for local and federal responders at the New Mexico Disaster Volunteer Training Summit. Evaluations were positive (Ave. 9.15 out of 10). Librarians also taught a similar class to undergraduate students in the University of New Mexico Emergency Medical Services Academy.

| Pre-test | Post-test |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2% of all attendees had used DIMRC | 98% were comfortable with DIMRC |
| 5% of all attendees had used WISER | 100% were comfortable with WISER |

CONCLUSION

Disaster responders are very interested in improving their access to disaster-related information. The NLM tools are very useful in this regard, and librarians are well-positioned for an informationist role within the disaster response system.

¹ University of New Mexico Center for Disaster Medicine ² University of New Mexico Health Sciences Library and Informatics Center

³ NLM-11-130-KDB "Disaster Health Information Outreach & Collaboration Project 2011".