Editorial: International Journal of Emergency Services: olume 3, No. 2

Notwithstanding the fact that the International Journal of Emergency Services (IJES) is a multidisciplinary journal and this issue was not meant to be a themed issue, the research papers contained within this issue are largely based on original research in the management of the Fire and Rescue Services. In addition, a common theme emerging from these papers is the limitations of the existing databases or sources of information that are available to policy makers and researches to meet the changing and often challenging contemporary demands on the services. A majority of papers in this issue also refer to the reducing number of traditional fire incidences and the indirect implications for training and development.

The current limitations of databases and information sources are clearly demonstrated by the first paper, by Pilemalm, Andersson and Mojir. Their research into the nationwide incident reporting system in Sweden is part of the government's desire to redesign the national incident reporting system as part of an extensive organisational change process to facilitate organisational learning within the Swedish Fire and Rescue Services. Their research confirms the earlier findings from Dekker and Jonsén (2007) that the fundamental prerequisites for learning from experience have been lacking. They also highlight new challenges to the Fire and Rescue Services which are not currently documented or reported and bring out the differences in stakeholder perceptions of the service. The latter point was manifested in conflicting interests between the central policy agency and firefighter representatives. The authors therefore advocate '*a community of practice*' approach in which all key stakeholders collaborate in joined-up policy making and delivery while developing a common 'fit-for-purpose' evidential base. UK readers will recognise this as the approach gradually developed in the UK prior to the change in government in 2010, after which it has been replaced by a more short-term reactive policy based upon cut-back management rather than the development of long-term service improvements.

The second paper in this issue also addresses the quality of the evidential base, utilising Klein's extensive, pioneering body of work on naturalistic decision making. This paper however focusses on capturing expert knowledge and in particular, transferring tacit knowledge from experts into the training regimes for less experienced colleagues. Drawing on both UK and Nigerian evidence the authors, Okoli, Weller and Watt, address three critical issues: assessment of the importance of accessing this tacit knowledge from the most qualified people within organisations; the most effective strategies for eliciting this knowledge; and the implications of the transferring expert knowledge to neophyte firefighters. The authors advocate the use of the critical decision method (CDM) adapted from Klein *et al* (1989) to develop a 'model' exhibiting some of the properties of the expert. The authors contend that a key element in training is 'learning though practice' and acknowledge that there is a decreasing rate of fire incidents upon which to develop experience, hence the increasing need for alternative training techniques.

Klein's work is also the starting point for the third paper by Lamb, Davies, Bowley and Williams. The authors, who are all serving Incident Command Development Officers in the UK, acknowledge that their research was triggered by an incident in Oxfordshire in 2006 in which a firefighter suffered life changing injuries. This incident occurred not so-long after the national mapping of roles within Fire and Rescue Services through the Integrated Personal Development Scheme (IPDS). With the active encouragement of the Chief Fire Officers Association this led to the development of the 'introspect model', over a five year timeline, by Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, which the authors believe will benefit the fire and rescue community by ensuring that incident commanders are better able to understand the rationale behind their decision making during incidents. The authors recognise the relative merits of '*in vivo*' over '*in vitro*' studies but draw attention to the fact that incidence rates, and therefore the opportunity to gain '*in vivo*' experience, are diminishing. They therefore used experts with '*in vivo*' experience to recreate appropriate conditions in a simulated environment. The findings from the use of these simulations have demonstrated that the incident commanders were making the 'right' decisions for the 'right' reasons, essentially demonstrating 'unconscious competence'.

Naturalistic or recognition-primed decisions in non-controlled emergency settings are also the concern of the fourth paper by Launder and Perry. The authors provide an Australian perspective drawn from their study of incident managers in urban fire settings in Adelaide South Australia. They attempt to demonstrate how theories of incident management and decision making can be synthesized to develop a behavioural model of decision making to inform policy and practice in urban fire settings. Their aim is to create a framework for developing procedural solutions that co-define and formalise the correct behaviours in dynamic emergencies whilst fostering effective decision making with the ultimate aim being to develop structured training programmes using their model. The authors also acknowledge the continuing reduction in fire incidence in Australian jurisdictions and therefore the rising need for simulation exercises to complement '*in vivo*' experience. It will surprise some readers to learn that there are currently no tertiary institutions or registered training agencies providing response management training to the Australasian Fire Authorities and that each Australian Urban Fire Authority has to develop its own strategy for training inexperienced and future incident managers, albeit based upon a range of competencies described in national guidance.

The fifth paper by Linsdell and Rogers looks at the capacity of emergency response services in sparsely populated areas. It investigates the pattern and dependence of these services on volunteers and questions whether, in the event of large scale widespread events, the capacity to respond may be affected by either salaried staff or volunteers being assumed to be available for more than one role and/or for more than one agency. Taking the New South Wales Rural Fire Service as the focus of its study it found that the number of public safety and emergency service personnel having multiple and simultaneous commitments to more than one agency (and individuals volunteering for more than one role) to be surprisingly high. Adopting the more appropriate term Multi Response Role Syndrome, rather than the "two hat syndrome" which is used in the only other study of this phenomenon, to better reflect the

multiple nature of some individuals commitments, they start to explore what decisions or actions these individuals may take when faced with simultaneous calls on their expertise from more than one agency and/or for their help in more than one role. Their work has clear implications for emergency planning and for the capacity, efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response, particularly in areas utilizing large numbers of volunteers and/or those prone to large, enduring or widespread disasters or emergencies.

Finally unlike traditional fire incidents, the potential for incidences involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) agents has increased in recent years and previous studies have highlighted their potential to generate fear and anxiety amongst the public that can be disproportionate to the event itself. Our final paper in this issue is by Carter, Drury, Rubin, Williams and Amlôt and contains further insights from their research into decontamination exercises that we first reported in IJES in 2013. Their previous literature review investigated how the communication strategies employed by emergency responders can shape public responses to decontamination and highlighted potential gaps in the planning for communication with members of the public during decontamination. The current paper reports on new primary research which investigates the perceptions of a group of responders with experience of decontamination exercises and another group without this experience. The paper suggests the latter group reflect the assumptions prevailing in current guidance that the public will 'panic' and at times may even refuse to comply in the event of mass decontamination. The more experienced managers perceive non-compliance and excessive anxiety to be rare and that more orderly behaviour was more common and more likely to be the norm. Although the number of interviewees in this study was relatively small and the authors acknowledge the experiences of the more experienced group were generally gained from small scale rather than mass decontamination incidents, it does question the assumption in current guidance which implicitly assumes that the public will 'panic' and that there may be more of an element of non-compliance. If these research findings are confirmed by further studies, there are obvious lessons for the redrafting of procedural guidance, the management of the public and ultimately the management of decontamination exercises.

As we approach the fourth year of publication, IJES has steadfastly sought to be a truly multi-disciplinary emergency management journal in publishing high quality research reflecting different management aspects of emergency services. The coverage of the papers in the three volumes has been global in approach and international in its appeal. We have succeeded in building a community of scholars who are equally passionate about these services and are happy to publish their work in IJES. The editorial team is also pleased to announce the success of the emergency management track (led by Dr Paresh Wankhade) at the European Academy of Management (EURAM) annual conference in Valencia, Spain in June 2014. Sixteen papers were submitted to the panel and Emerald has agreed to publish a special issue of IJES in 2015 (Volume 4, Issue 1). The special issue will focus on the broader theme of "***Organisational resilience: management of emergencies & crises***" reflecting the breadth of the papers presented at the EURAM 2014 and the aims and objectives of IJES. The issue will be jointed edited by Dr Paresh Wankhade and Dr Shankar Sankaran (EURAM 2014 panel proponent) from University of Technology Sydney, Australia.

The inclusion of a special issue in our publishing schedule reflects the role and contribution of IJES in attracting a new group of scholars at a global level and also highlights the growing recognition of emergency management as a sub-management theme of research enquiry. We feel reassured that this direction of travel reflects a growing engagement with scholars involved in the management of emergencies in an international arena. We are very grateful to the authors who have supported IJES in the past three years and look forward to engaging with new scholars, researchers, practitioners and academics, to support IJES in its' endeavour to promote the study and improvement of emergency services.

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