

## Editorial introduction- International Journal of Emergency Services

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In our inaugural editorial, we tried to outline the nature and scope of the International Journal of Emergency Services and its' future direction of travel. The fragmentary nature of emergency services research together with the strong theory-practise divide was one of the reasons for establishing a new journal with a broad and inclusive view of emergency services research.. We also saw our task as being custodians of a journal for emergency services researchers looking to challenge traditional boundaries as well as celebrating specific but diverse organisational and cultural characteristics.. We believe that this second issue builds on this promise. It covers the main "blue light" services, demonstrating a more detailed understanding of the police, fire and rescue and ambulance services, both in the UK and internationally, and exploring the wider implications of the emergency services research around the world. (not sure this fits at this point - rather breaks up the narrative)

In this issue, Brett Williams *et al*, make a strong case for greater understanding of the improved empathy needed among healthcare professionals which earlier studies have shown directly impacts on healthcare outcomes. Reviewing the rather scarce published literature in relation to paramedic practice and empathy, the authors argue that it has already been shown to be of vital importance in the out-of-hospital environment. Based upon empirical findings from their study assessing the extent of empathy in paramedic students across seven Australian universities, the authors provide a framework for educators to begin constructing guidelines focusing on the need to incorporate, promote and instil empathy into paramedic students in order to better prepare them for future out-of-hospital healthcare practice. These insights demonstrate the need for empathy training for the ambulance personnel and the often challenging nature of the pre-hospital environment in which the paramedics work across different healthcare systems.

John Raine and Paul Keasey explore the implications of the introduction of the elected Police & Crime Commissioners (PCC) in the UK. Elected PCCs will take office in November 2012, in each police force area outside London, and will take on the key governance role hitherto undertaken by the forty three Police Authorities since their establishment five decades ago but which are now being abolished. The authors highlight concerns that the PCC's 'democratic' interests in the policing of local communities could well be at the relative expense of neglect of other important aspects of policing work, most notably protective and security-related activities. Many chief constables, and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) as the body representing chiefs, have aired such concerns. Presenting different scenarios about the key accountability relationships likely to emerge with the introduction of the elected PCCs, the paper is a very timely discussion on the likely implications on accountability issues for effective policing in the UK. Although context

specific, the relevance of these findings will be recognisable to those involved with the wider police reform agenda and will be of interest well beyond the UK.

Diane Catherwood offers some of the first empirical findings about situational awareness and decision-making biases displayed by firefighters in different settings or contexts. Although only limited empirical evidence is available to understand factors affecting individual differences in bias, its understanding is critical to minimizing risk in decision-making with the fire and rescue service (FRS). Applying the well established QASA technique to two table-top experiments, the paper investigates whether response bias tendencies are apparent in FRS personnel in fireground simulation exercises and whether there are individual differences in bias. The account suggests that even with high levels of knowledge; FRS personnel will still be subject to the same bias tendencies as untrained individuals. Providing an analytical tool, this empirical account within a very contemporary context will have a clear resonance to scholars who may like to test this hypothesis in different settings with different organisational and cultural characteristics.

(Insert first name)Doyle *et al.*, in their piece exhibits thematic similarity to the work of Brett Willaims *et al.*, by locating their contribution also within the context of *training*. Specifically, the authors highlight the importance of the relevant information and training that could better equip local government emergency managers to prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters, with a focus on improving their decision making capabilities during response. This exploratory study contributes towards our conceptual and practical understanding of the decision-making approaches within local government and has clear research implications for further and more comparative work across different contexts and organisations.

The practise interface again contains two contributions which both add further to the diversity of the subjective contents of the issue. In our previous editorial we anticipated that a central theme of the next few years will be the continuing need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services in an era of scarce resources and rising public expectations. Bernadette Richardson reports on a huge inter-agency collaborative project in California which responded to the exponential increase in the use of wireless technology and mobile phones to contact emergency call centres that meant that in 2007 42% of the 11.6 million wireless enhanced emergency calls were failing to get through. As a result of the Routing of Empirical Data (RED) project, the percentage of „busy calls was reduced to 2.3% in 2011 despite an 8 million increase in calls received.

Finally, and as with our first issue, we feature an interview with a prominent practitioner. Sir David Nicholson is the Chief Executive of the National Health Service, the largest healthcare organisation in the world. An organisation facing unprecedented challenges in terms of increasing demands, rising costs and reducing resources, but an organisation Sir David sees as rediscovering its purpose and determined to meet the challenges it faces. The interview was conducted shortly after the 2012 Health and Social Care Act was passed and followed a lecture and round table discussion at Nottingham Business School at the end of May. What

struck most of us that had the good fortune to attend these events was not only the clarity of his thinking but also how much of his vision and strategy appeared to be based on the discourse, conceptualisations and theoretical perspectives of the Public Value or New Public Service theory of Stoker (2006), Mulgan (2009) and Bennington and Moore (2011). When the original proposals were announced in the white paper (DoH 2010) they appeared to be based upon a confused mixture of „principle agent and „public choice theory and lead to one of the largest and longest public consultations undertaken by the government through the now famous „listening exercise (DoH 2011). Sir Davids proposals for translating the act into practise are much more coherent and much better understood through the theoretical prism of New Public Service theory. This is clearly evident in the future roles he envisages for General Practitioners, who guide or navigate the patients through the system and the new role for general and acute hospitals who in future will be expected to take a system-wide and community-wide view of their roles and responsibilities.

We believe all the articles in this issue cover important aspects of emergency service management in a contemporary context. Evidence cited in each of these papers is also relevant beyond their specific contexts. In future editions we look to carry forward these discussions.

#### References

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