

Emergency Medical Responders with New Healthcare Roles Reflect on Collaboration within the Civil Unrest Context

Casey-John Keyes, B.A., Paramedic, OMS II (Class of '23); Wyatt Blackstone (Class of '22) Health Wellness and Occupational Studies Major; Bethany A. Gruskin, B.S. Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (Class of '21); John Caswell B.S. Accelerate Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Class of '21); Chris Eidson, B.S., Doctor of Physical Therapy (Class of '23)

Event Description

Protest Medicine: How to Leverage Your Role as a Provider during Civil Unrest was inspired by the protests following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. As a non-political discussion, the event focused on educating and informing graduate and undergraduate health profession students on how to leverage their roles to provide basic first aid and medical support during community activism. Led by an interprofessional team from the University of New England (UNE), this event was attended by more than 120 students and faculty from over 12 disciplines.

Objectives

1. Discuss effective roles and collaboration in bridging the team's common experiences and new capacities
2. Analyze opportunities for improved collaboration
3. Address teamwork, roles, and responsibilities of different health care professionals within the Civil Unrest Context

History of Protest Medicine

- In 1964 the Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR) was organized in New York to travel to the south to participate in the Freedom Summer
- Medical volunteers from MCHR were barred from receiving licensure from Mississippi Department of health, able to practice first aid only
- In 1999 the World Trade Organization meetings sparked massive protests in Seattle leading to more organized street medic training and participation

Roles

- Casey-John Keyes (COM, 23') served as the group leader:
 - Liaised between the CECE production team and the Protest Medicine Team, including organizing meetings and relaying information
 - Recruited and cultivated participation from UNE students from multiple disciplines with emergency medical training
 - Coordinated and scheduled group meetings
 - Created and revised the content for the presentation
- The remaining group members provided lived experiences as emergency medical providers and perspectives based on their new capacities given additional education at UNE
 - Communicated in virtual context and attend group meetings/rehearsals
 - Key feature: current/former emergency medical providers pursuing new career paths



Casey-John Keyes' phone, 2020

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7434819/Protester-Hong-Kong-neutralises-tear-canister-fired-police.html>

Collaboration Highlights

- **Empower:** collaborating with providers from similar backgrounds in emergency medicine who are now exploring other career opportunities
 - Few people in our individual majors have similar backgrounds and lived experiences
- **Envision:** considering how our current career paths can be leveraged to provide aide and support other first responders
- **Communicate:** articulating intra- and inter- professionally how our our current career paths continue to play a role in supporting emergency medical professions procedurally, pragmatically, ethically, and narratively
- **Motivate:** encouraging other students from diverse personal and professional backgrounds to capitalize on their skills to provide support during civil unrest effectively and safely
 - Directly and indirectly depending on their scope of practice
 - Providing continued educational opportunities

Opportunities for Improvement

- We encountered challenges managing restrictions in time, workload, and work styles
 - Having a truly collaborative team in the virtual context, across multiple time zones, and while carrying full-course loads with other priorities was challenging
- Recommendations for how this group could function better in the future:
 - Establishing group priorities and vision for this project
 - This would include understanding how each group members current career path contributes to all aspects of this project
 - Increased division of core content to equalize workload
 - Discussing our preferred communication styles/methods of contact (text, e-mail, etc.)

Situational Awareness

- Situations can change rapidly; it is vital you continue to assess the situation and plan ahead
 - The OODA Loop is a good tool for this: **Observe, Orient, Decide, Act**
- Ensure you have exits for yourself and any patients you might have
- Understand not everyone at the protest is there for the same reason, be aware of those around you
- Counter Protest Weapons
 - LRAD, less-than-lethal, chemical irritants, taser, flashbang incendiary, outside agitation
- Personal Protective Equipment
 - Helmet, goggles, mask, footwear, leather gloves, medical exam gloves, medic identification

Legal and Ethical Considerations

- Good Samaritan Law-
 - Allows bystanders to give **reasonable assistance** and render **good faith aid** to those who are injured without fear of legal reciprocity
- **Do No Harm**
- Know and operate within your scope of practice
 - Consent is required, recognize you will encounter a variety of people with many different beliefs
 - The way you render aid many not be wanted
 - Recognize and understand Impaired and Implied Consent

Social Concerns and Harm Reduction

- Beware that prolonged protests leads to shutdown of services.
- Delayed EMS and Police response
- Food for disabled individuals
- Alcohol Withdrawals → **CIWA Scale:**
<https://www.mdcalc.com/ciwa-ar-alcohol-withdrawal>
- Management of Chronic Medical Conditions

References

- Dittmer, J. (2014, September 01). The Medical Committee for Human Rights. Retrieved January 27, 2021, from <https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/medical-committee-human-rights/2014-09>
- Geijer, H. (2020). Riot Medicine [1]. Creative Commons. Retrieved January 21, 2021, from <https://paperrevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/riot-medicine.pdf>
- Immunity from civil liability U. S. C. §164 (1977). <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/14/title14sec164.html>