

SIMTEC NEWSLETTER

Happy New Year!

I hope that 2012 is a great year for you and your families. Certainly for our project it is an exciting year as we move ahead with our first exercise – the pilot is scheduled for February 10th 2012, the test for March 9th 2012 and the final psychosocial exercise for October 29th 2012. Our exercise is based on the suggestions we received at the Expert Working Group (EWG) session held in October – with multiple events involving fires, structural collapse and adverse weather! **Please check our website** for additional information as it becomes available.

Book This Date!

Our EWG will reconvene on **October 30th 2012** for their annual meeting to review the project's progress to date as well as the next steps in the research. By this time we will have run the final Psychosocial Exercise and will be looking for your comments and suggestions to help finalize the training and exercise for posting to our Collaboratory in December 2012. As well, we will be well into the development work on our second exercise which will involve psychosocial considerations for decontamination protocols. So lot's of opportunity to share your expertise.

The Project Review Committee (PRC) will convene on October 31st 2012. The PRC will review the project's progress, evaluate the financial status and discuss any recommended changes to the project Charter.

Next Steps

Between now and the end of June we have a number of tasks to complete. Once the analyses for the pilot and test exercises is complete we will be concentrating on developing the decision tree model as part of our ethnographic decision making research.

Once the model is constructed we will then be validating it by sending it out for review to EWG members. With the results of the analyses in hand we will begin to develop the psychosocial injects for the fall exercise and the EOC training package. After the final Psychosocial Exercise we will again conduct our thematic analysis and make the final amendments before our release in December.

Starting in the spring we will begin our literature review focusing on decontamination and specifically looking at how psychosocial considerations are (or are not) included in existing procedures. We will also be conducting interviews with members of the EWG and starting to develop the decontamination psychosocial protocols in the fall. So a busy six months ahead!

As well, I am pleased that another research project has been approved by the Centre of Security Sciences regarding the establishment of a *National Training Program for Health, Psychosocial, Media and Technology Responders attending CBRNE Incidents* due to natural, accidental or intentional acts. We will be collaborating with Project team members Alan Dick and Laurie Mazurik from Ontario.

The fall will also find JIBC with a new president as our current President Jack McGee just announced his decision to retire in September. Jack has been a great supporter of our project and we are sorry to see him leave.

I do hope that as our project unfolds you will find our regular updates interesting and that you will take the opportunity to share your thoughts and ideas with us. We welcome contributions to our Newsletter and website. All the best in the coming year.

Laurie Pearce
SIMTEC Research Chair



SIMTEC Progress to Date

Exercise Development

Through the hard work and collaboration of everyone involved with the SIMTEC team, lead by Darren Blackburn from the Emergency Management Division of JIBC, the pilot phase of the project is moving forward smoothly. On January 9th, our exercise development team met with a few members of our EWG: Wade Pierlot, Deputy Chief Emergency Operations, Vancouver Fire Rescue Services; Bruce Ramsay, Trauma Services; and Rod Salem, Director, Emergency Management Office, Provincial Programs, British Columbia Ambulance. The meeting was very productive and informative in helping fine tune the design of the Pilot Exercise to help ensure that it is as realistic as possible.

Given that different communities, provinces, and countries have different approaches for managing Emergency Operations Centres (EOC) it was important to us that the exercise be adaptable to different systems. While Incident Command Systems (ICS) are being adopted at the EOC level in many jurisdictions, not all EOCs use ICS or a version of ICS. Thus, when injects come into the exercise they can't be directed to "someone in Operations" or "Logistics" in case, down the road when the exercises are available on our Collaboratory the community wishing to use the exercise does not practice ICS. While we can't accommodate everyone everywhere we are trying to develop a scenario, for our first exercise especially, that can be used by many communities in English-speaking developed countries (but with a bit of a Canadian twist ☺).

The Pilot Exercise is scheduled for February 10th, 2012. The filming of the various injects, which involves local actors and responders, will be taking up the latter half

of January with the final reviews taking place the first week of February.

The Pilot Exercise will include 24 participants, with local engagement from Metro Vancouver. We have three communities recruited for the pilot: Vancouver, Coquitlam and New Westminster and we are in the process of finalizing our last community for the pilot.

The Test Exercise will take place on March 9th, 2012. This exercise will be amended following the Pilot Exercise. We will be holding a focus group with each of the pods to identify areas where the exercise was effective and areas which need to be have some additional work done. As well, these initial interviews will start to explore thoughts on the decision-making process (e.g., who did or did not contribute to the decision-making); the critical decision-making points during the exercise; and when participants noticed the possibility of including some psychosocial considerations.

Ethics Submission

The Project's Ethics Submission for Exercise #1 was presented to the JIBC Ethics Review Committee in late November and was approved December 1, 2011. Many thanks to Bethan Lloyd for leading this aspect of the project. It will be of no surprise to many of you just how much work was involved in pulling together all of the various components of this research project to comply with all of the ethics requirements. The ethics submission was developed to meet the requirements of the Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS is the joint research ethics policy of the three national granting agencies (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC).

Literature Review and Research Design

We are winding down our literature review (always difficult to know when to stop!). One main area of focus has been: decision-making, simulations and background on the use of our methodological approaches: Klein's Recognition-Primed Decision framework and Ethnographic Decision Tree Modeling. The second area has been to look at psychosocial responses in Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) personnel. While there is a lot of literature on stress in disaster/emergency situations we have had difficulty finding a lot of material which specifically focuses on EOCs. If you are aware of some articles which would be of help please let us know.

We are now working on developing the “code book” for our analysis of the exercises and the focus groups. We will be using NVivo 9 to assist us in capturing both the dialogue and the audio-visual cues from the pods. We will be looking at examples where psychosocial support is provided to other EOC members and where considerations are given to providing psychosocial interventions to responders and the community-at-large.

SIMTEC Website

Our SIMTEC website has been enhanced – we have a Public Messaging Service to keep everyone updated with what we are doing, related news and areas of interest between issues of our regular Newsletter. We have finished our updates to the portal for EWG members who are now able to login and comment on the EWG Discussion Board. EWG members can also post information, links, documents, etc. to be shared with other members. Our SIMTEC Facebook page is also available for anyone to add comments, provide suggestions, etc. and can be found at our main website (<http://simtec.jibc.ca/node/14>). You can also follow us

on Twitter at [@SimtecProject](https://twitter.com/SimtecProject). Please sign up and follow us!

B. Rix Simulation Centre

The contractors and JIBC staff have just finished the enhancements to the B. Rix Simulation Centre at JIBC to include video capability to the main discussion room and they have enhanced the quality of the cameras in the pod rooms. Work has now begun on the further development to the JIBC ExPOD system to allow us to export our exercises to any destination in the world with high speed Internet access.

Building the Research Team

We are pleased to announce the addition of three new members to our research team, Christine Yu will be acting in the position of Researcher III and Alanna Thompson and Ciara Moran both in the position of Researcher I.

Christine Yu - Researcher III



Christine joined the SIMTEC (CRTI 08-0114RD) Project in December 2011. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at Simon Fraser University and is currently in her third and final year of the Master of Arts, Counselling Psychology program at UBC. Christine brings a combination of research and clinical skills to the team. She has 5 years of research experience including managing research teams. Her responsibilities ranged from literature reviews, recruitment, data collection and analysis, collaborating with international researchers to disseminate findings, as well as daily operations. Through her education and work in the Employee and Family Assistance Program industry, the Victim Services Unit for the Vancouver Police Department and as a Youth Worker at a local community centre, she has learned invaluable

organizational, administrative and both individual and group therapy skills.

Alanna Thompson - Researcher I



Alanna Thompson completed her Bachelor of Arts with a major in Psychology from the University of British Columbia in 2008. She is currently completing her Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology at UBC, and expects to graduate in spring 2012. Alanna's practical experience involves providing counselling to individuals, couples, and groups.

For her MA thesis project, Alanna is investigating the perceived impact of operational stress in policing on the marital relationship, to gain the knowledge required to assist in the development of new resources to enhance social support and resilience for police families. Alanna has five years of experience as a volunteer and auxiliary caseworker in a police-based victim services program, and worked previously as a family support worker with a non-profit community agency, providing strength-based outreach support to families facing issues such as poverty violence, and trauma.

Ciara Moran - Researcher I



Ciara Moran completed her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at the University of British Columbia in 2008. She is currently in her first year of the Master of Arts Counselling Psychology program at UBC and expects to graduate in 2014. She is experienced in crisis intervention techniques and training as well as anxiety management education. Her research involvement includes investigations into peer pressure and university dropout rates as well as the effects of stress on memory. She is currently developing her MA thesis topic which will focus on stressors and coping techniques in front-line workers.

Funding Partners

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Project Partner

We also like to acknowledge the support of Royal Roads University.



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