

Greetings!

Well, it has all been kind of a whirlwind over the past month what with the Winter Blues! Exercise on October 29th, the Expert Working Group (EWG) Meeting on the 30th and our Project Review Committee Meeting on the 31st!

First of all I would like to thank the communities of Vancouver, Delta and Maple Ridge and the North Shore Emergency Management Office for supporting our project and participating in the Winter Blues! Exercise. We realize that it is a big commitment in terms of times and resources and really appreciate the dedication of your staff for participating.

As well, I would like to thank all our EWG members, and especially our international members for coming to the EWG meeting. In addition we were delighted to have our Project Champion, François Legault, the National Director of the Employee Assistance Services (EAS) Bureau from Health Canada, our funding partner Ahmad Khorchid from the Centre for Security Sciences and international experts Colin Tansley from the UK; Bruce Blythe; from the US, Avi Kirschenbaum from Israel; and Mike Tarrant from Australia. It was a fully packed day and we were able to accomplish a lot. We certainly benefited from your expertise and knowledge and have been able to move forward in a number of areas as a result of your involvement.

Winter Blues!

Our exercise on October 29th was very successful. Many of the features that we added to the exercise to increase the realism worked well. Principally, hiring “professional” newscasters, using existing dispatchers and working responders to create radio dispatches helped to duplicate the EOC working environment. We completed our analysis of the focus groups with

exercise participants and most of the previously mentioned issues (voiced during the pilot and test exercises) were not mentioned this time around. There are still the issues that arise from being in a simulated EOC environment (e.g., not being able to use individual radios/phones) but the participants were still very much engaged in the exercise.

We are making a one change to the format of the exercise – providing more time at the beginning of the exercise for participants to become familiar with Denton – but otherwise, other than a few minor changes to a couple of radio dispatches/responses we seemed to have ironed out most of the initial concerns. Many thanks to Darren Blackburn, from the Emergency Management Division, and to Bob Walker and Simon Chau for their contributions to the exercise.

We also have completed the analysis of the participants and the members of the EWG regarding the training video. Interestingly, the participants were not as critical of the video as a number of you from the EWG. Many of you commented on the quality of the acting, some of the technical details of the actual video production and that the video didn’t reflect the degree of research that had been done. I also had the opportunity to review the videos with Health Canada’s Psycho-Social Emergency Responder Team (PSERT), a national team of senior trauma counsellors who help with the mental health needs of federal employees involved in emergencies such as terrorism or a natural disaster. Their feedback was also very useful.

As mentioned, we take your feedback seriously and we are now in midst of redoing the training video to incorporate as many of your suggestions as possible. We are shortening the video - rather than showing what happened and then showing a better way to handle the situation we will be focusing on providing the context (e.g., smaller communities will have smaller EOCs) and

stressing the importance of the five themes. We are also adding in the importance of the Team Support Worker as a sixth “theme.” We will be including some short clips from EWG members to demonstrate the validity of our themes and to validate the suggested practices. We are also hiring a professional narrator (e.g., TV commentator) to enhance the production/technical aspects of the video and adding music, quality still shots, etc. where appropriate.

Having completed the analysis from the exercise participants and the EWG on the exercise and video feedback we are now ready to begin the analysis of the exercise itself. Our preliminary findings confirm that the training video was helpful in changing EOC behaviour (i.e., EOC personnel did take breaks) but that the change was not sustained throughout the exercise. As the stress increased, the exercise participants “forgot” to practice worker care.

We did see early and rapid deployment of Emergency Social Services and Disaster Psychosocial Services <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/emergency/dstrs.html> which was very rewarding and added support to front line workers – so we were pleased with the results. I am hopeful that with the revised training video we will see great uptake of the key points.

We are finishing off the Exercise Guidebook and will be launching, as planned, the Winter Blues! Exercise in the New Year. It will be available from the SIMTEC website and will be available free of charge to any community in the world who wishes to run the exercise. The Guidebook will provide a “how-to” for the Exercise Director – all that will be needed is access to high-speed internet and two computers to run the exercise. This is a world-first (as far as we know) and are very excited to see the uptake. So stay tuned for the official announcement!

Decontamination Exercise

We continue to move ahead with our work on developing our decontamination exercise. We have just started to receive the transcripts from the EWG sessions regarding suggestions for the functional tabletop exercise. Just from the first transcript alone we have received dozens of great ideas. It will take us some time to collect all of your ideas and to figure out what would work best in the time we have available and the budget we have available to develop the exercise. We always appreciate the “reality lens” that the EWG brings to our work.

We have formed a Decontamination Exercise Development Committee to start to work on the decontamination drill planned for March of 2013 and had our first meeting on November 29th. Thanks to the following members:

- Rene Bernklau, BCAS
- Dorit Mason, NSEMO
- Graham Eadie, RCMP
- Greg Ryskie, VFRS
- Daryl Krumbhols, RCMP CBRNE
- Adam Lund, UBC
- Karen Martin, Coalition for Persons with Disabilities
- Bob Schreiner, NVC Fire
- Dave Nelmes/Mel Caparie
- Dave Reid, VCHA Lionsgate Hospital
- Heleen Sandvik, PHSA
- Karen Collins, Coroner’s Services
- Sheila Turis, Researcher

We are very pleased that North Vancouver City Fire Chief Bob Schreiner has agreed to “host” the decontamination exercise in March. This will provide an excellent learning opportunity for his team as well as providing our research team an opportunity to test our recommendations for psychosocial considerations for civilian populations during decontamination. EWG member, Rene Bernklau, has just returned last month from Japan where he attended an international

conference on CBRNE and decontamination and also brought back information from the recent workshop in Ottawa organized by the Canadian Safety and Security Project (CSSP). This was very helpful to the committee.

We are fortunate to have Ray Monteith working on this project with us as he is currently actively conducting a comprehensive literature review on the newest/best practices for decontamination operational protocols. There are some new developments which suggest a paradigm shift in the world of decontamination around “dry” decontamination, rethinking about the practices of what to do for potentially contaminated individuals during what can be a long wait before the arrival of the Haz Mat team, and assessment models to determine who should receive the more invasive and intrusive methods of decontamination.

We have tight deadlines ahead of us! Ray is hoping to have the draft protocols available for mid-January and will begin a process of peer review at that time. We will then develop and provide the training for Chief Schreiner’s personnel and other participating first responders in late February with the exercise mid-March.

In the meantime our research team will be reviewing the literature review analysis and the findings from our key informant interviews to develop the psychosocial interventions. We are developing some really creative and interesting ideas and look forward to sharing them with you as move ahead with the development of those ideas.



Please do let us know if you have any questions and look for our updates on our website.

Laurie Pearce

SIMTEC Research Chair

International Expert Profile

Mike Tarrant

Michael Tarrant holds adjunct appointments; including Associate Professor in the Public Health Faculty at Queensland University of Technology and in the Department of Tropical Medicine at James Cook University Townsville. Until 2012 he was an Assistant Director at the Australian Emergency Management Institute. He has worked in Disaster management for the past 25 years and since 1996 has been a member of Standards Australia, Risk Management Committee and is a joint author of the Australian Standard on Business Continuity-Managing Disruption Related Risk AS/NZS 5050.

He has presented to conferences, run courses and workshops in Thailand, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden, Philippines, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Italy, China, England, Canada and the US and is an advisory Board Member for the Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness.

Since 1996 he has worked at a national level as member of Standards Australia, Risk Management Committee and is a joint author of the Australian Standard on Business Continuity-Managing Disruption Related Risk AS/NZS 5050. He has written and contributed to a wide range of emergency management publications over many years. He is a technical expert to three ISO TC 223 working groups on societal security.

Research Team Updates

Adam Vaughan



Adam Vaughan is the successful candidate for the Researcher III position. Adam is a PhD student with the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University.

The overarching approach to his research is to explore the overrepresentation of minorities in the criminal justice system. His current research investigates the intersection between the mental health care system and the criminal justice system. More specifically, he is interested in the effectiveness of collaborative problem solving programs between the mental health care practitioners and the police on reducing recidivism and improving mental well-being in severely mentally ill persons.

Adam teaches criminological research methods to undergraduate students, he is a research assistant with The Institute for Canadian Urban Research Studies, and he sits on the board of directors for the Canadian Chapter of the National Niemann-Pick Disease Foundation.

Outside of the professional world, Adam enjoys the personal journey of learning to make Italian food.

Alanna Thompson – Researcher I



As of November 2, Alanna is now officially on maternity leave! Alanna was a great help during the delivery of our Winter Blues! Exercise and the EWG held during the last two days of October. And we are all very grateful for all the extra effort that she made to join us to help out and support the project during those long days! On behalf of everyone on the SIMTEC Project Team we wish Alanna, Gord and their new daughter Clara (born November 26th) our congratulations!

Important Dates Planned for October 2013

We are firming up dates in **October 2013** to run the Decontamination Exercise, host the annual Expert working Group (EWG) meeting and meet with the Project Review Committee (PRC). We'll keep everyone posted once the dates have been confirmed.

Funding Partners

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Project Partner



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

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