Background: Deaf people constitute a minority group; most deaf people use sign language, which is not universal. In emergencies and disasters, conditions are created that can affect their lives. The role of a sign language interpreter in emergencies can be vital. In Israel, there are no regulations concerning the work of the interpreters in emergency situations. Despite that there are about 250 registered interpreters of Israel Sign Language, only around 120 professional interpreters work.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey of 84 interpreters of sign language in Israel was carried out. A self-administered questionnaire was developed, inquiring into various aspects of willingness to work in emergency situations, including translator-client interactions and translators' work characteristics.

Results: The majority of respondents live in the central region of Israel (79%), 83% of them are women. Only 45% of interpreters work full-time. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents are hearing children of deaf parents. Half of them stated that in emergency situations, they need to help a relative before working as an interpreter.

Conclusion: <u>Significance of the findings</u>: In an emergency, there might not be enough sign language interpreters. Most interpreters are women who do not work full time, and are committed to care for their family first. Most emergency situations in Israel have occurred in periphery areas of the country, where a small number of interpreters live. These findings point to inequities in emergency situations, not only towards the deaf community, but also among different groups in the deaf community. <u>Recommendations</u>: Encourage interpreters of sign language to study and work in periphery areas, granting financial incentives to study professional interpretation, and to work during emergencies.

Pandemic Preparedness in the Homeless Sector: Reports from Homeless People

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Study/Objective: To determine the extent to which homeless people were aware of, and able to prepare for, the possibility of a pandemic influenza outbreak.

Background: The health of homeless people is precarious, with rates of chronic illness reported at three and four times that of the general population. One overarching issue is how they can cope with related health, shelter, and food issues in the event of a pandemic outbreak. This presentation reports on a nationwide study of pandemic preparedness, from the viewpoint of homeless people. The time-frame in which the data were collected included an outbreak of H1N1 influenza. Thus, the respondents had real-time experiences in effective and non-helpful approaches to dealing with a possible pandemic.

Methods: In four Canadian cities, Toronto, Regina, Calgary, and Victoria, 351 homeless individuals participated in extensive interviews that covered a range of housing, health, and coping behaviors. The content of the interviews specifically dealt with experiences during the threat of a pandemic outbreak of H1N1, experiences with health and shelter staff, and recommendations for further preparation in the event of an outbreak. Data were coded and analyzed using SPSS-22. Analysis examined both national and between-city differences in responses.

Results: Consistent across all sites were reports of lack of training and preparedness by staff in shelters and day programs. Homeless people also reported that they were most likely to get reliable information from health care workers, but their most frequent source of information was the media. A majority would also try to avoid shelters and day programs in the event of a pandemic, but many could not identify where they would go.

Conclusion: Shelters and day programs are ill-prepared to handle the consequences of a pandemic outbreak. Resources for recuperation from illness, especially in the event of a pandemic outbreak, is a significant concern for homeless people.

Capability and Vulnerability: A Discourse Analysis of Multi-Jurisdictional Emergency Planning Documents

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Study/Objective: The purpose of this study is to explore dominant language in emergency planning, to understand how perceptions of capability and vulnerability are communicated. Research Question: What are the discourses across different levels of disaster and emergency management plans and planning frameworks, related to persons in the general population and those who live with functional limitations? Objective: To explain how discourse symbolizes perceptions of capability and vulnerability in multi-jurisdictional preparedness planning.

Background: Disaster management is an example of a complex system. Some individuals, such as persons living with functional limitations, tend to be more negatively affected by disasters than others. Different strategies such as policy development, communication and analysis of dominant discourses used in practice must be considered to facilitate empowerment among high risk populations (O'Sullivan, Kuziemsky, Corneil, Lemyre, & Franco, 2014). It is also important to facilitate empowerment and social participation by incorporating an all-of-society approach in emergency planning (UNISDR, 2015). The lives of persons living with functional limitations are represented through written, spoken, and social practices of government and politics. Discourse analysis provides insight into the social construction of society by interpreting the meanings and social implications of language.

Methods: A document analysis of Canadian government emergency planning documents and emergency management

frameworks from global governance organizations (eg. UNISDR Sendai Framework) was undertaken. The dataset was analyzed using discourse analysis (Rose, 2012).

Results: The results of this study explore capability and vulnerability among high risk populations and will contribute to policy development, with the aim that it manifests in inclusive practice.

Conclusion: Potential contributions of this study include increased awareness and public discussion, about how capability and vulnerability are communicated through discourse in planning documents. This in turn could impact policy development and training across different jurisdictions and sectors involved in disaster management, thereby supporting inclusive practice and an all-of-society approach to disaster management strategies.

Evaluating the Experiences with an Information and Referral Center (IRC) following a Large Air Crash Disaster

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Study/Objective: To evaluate the use of, and experiences with a 'one-stop-shop' website for information and referral for bereaved people following an air crash disaster.

Background: On July 17, 2014 the disaster of Flight MH17 (Malaysia Airlines) took place above Eastern Ukraine. None of the 298 passengers and crew survived the flight, of which 196 were of Dutch nationality. Within 26 hours, an Information and Referral Center (IRC) was set up.

Methods: A total of 128 bereaved persons filled out a questionnaire, and 22 bereaved persons joined in to 5 focus groups to discuss their experiences. In addition, data was gathered via a pop-up questionnaire on the IRC itself, as well as statistics of website use. Finally, in a series of 16 interviews, representatives from all the agencies involved with the IRC, were asked about their expectations and experiences in the development of the IRC.

Results: Three main goals of the IRC were tested. (1) Dependable information: The IRC is seen as a dependable source of information. Specifically appreciated was the availability of news before it appeared in the media, and its function as a news-archive. (2) Peer-to-peer contact: Results on this goal were more ambiguous. Some of the bereaved used the IRC for personal contact, most however, had difficulties sharing via an open forum, and preferred real-life contact. (3) Collection of meaningful data on specific needs: It proved difficult to generate data on specific needs for additional care.

Conclusion: Systematic evaluations, including experiences from bereaved persons, as well as the organizations facilitating online communities as the IRC are scarce, and underlying assumptions are rarely made explicit or tested. Based on a more elaborate presentation of the results in the presentation, assumptions on what an IRC should constitute will be further discussed.

The Aging Population During Emergencies: A Vulnerable Population or a Community Resource?

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Study/Objective: To present trends in community resilience scores throughout the lifespan.

Background: There is an increase in civilian population exposure to emergencies. The local population has an importance role in providing lifesaving care. Therefore, there is a need to prepare and enhance the communities to handle those situations. In this context, the elderly are traditionally treated as a susceptible population with special needs. Community resilience is a core element in coping with emergencies.

Methods: Fifteen small and mid-size towns in Israel were surveyed using the Conjoint Community Resilience Assessment Measure (CCRAM) tool. The study was conducted using two methods: 1) randomly selected address surveys, and 2) distributing web-based surveys to electronic mailing lists of small communities. Correlation analysis examined the relationship between the CCRAM scores and age. Linear regression modeled the dependent variable: CCRAM score with background variables.

Results: The study included 1,052 adults (mean age 44.65, SD = 15, range 18-86 years), from midsize towns (n = 490, 46.6%) and small communities (n = 562, 53.4%). Correlation between age and CCRAM score was positive (1044) = 0.128, p < 0.001. A multiple linear regression (F = 19.5, p < 0.001) explored the age of 61-75 with significant positive association (B = .181, p = .006, 95%CI = .053-.310) to CCRAM score, in comparison to the reference group of 31-45 years.

Conclusion: The study reveals an increase in community resilience scores among aging populations living in the community. Thus, the elders may be a resource to their community. Based on this, the unique input of this group to the general community is considered an advantage.

Community Adherence to Emergency Public Health Measures During Bio-Events

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Study/Objective: To assess the predictive role of health behavior theory on adherence to emergency public health measures needed during "bio events" (ie, outbreaks, epidemics, and pandemics).