Editorial: Volume 13, issue 1

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We are excited to present the editorial for the first issue of Volume 13 in 2024. In this issue, the *International Journal of Emergency Services (IJES)* is publishing eight original articles that explore a range of subjects relevant to the broader emergency management agenda across four continents. Out of the eight articles, five papers address important topics such as preparative collaboration, building agile capabilities for emergency response, the use of social media, developing risk assessment tools and understanding the impact of leadership behaviours on the mental well-being of public safety communicators. The three remaining papers cover the important issue of professional regulation in the ambulance service, an improved GIS algorithm for fire crew travel time estimation and an evidence-based approach to front-line leadership in policing. All the papers, importantly, contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of emergency services management, thereby improving scholarly and practitioner understanding of the issues examined.

In our first article entitled "European emergency managers on social media: institutional arrangements and guidelines", Sten Torpan *et al.* provide a novel, cross-national comparative overview of European emergency managers' institutional arrangements and guidelines for using social media in risk and crisis communication. Based upon publicly available data in eight European countries and over 90 interviews with emergency managers, the article highlights that in spite of a strong degree of regulation in some countries, the general use and choice of social media tools in emergency management is not centralised, and social media crisis communication is regulated with the guidelines for crisis communication on traditional media. These are significant findings with clear research implications for considering theories of institutional arrangements from organisation studies and theories of social vulnerability from sociological literature (Torpan *et al.*, 2021).

The second article is co-authored by Mohammad A. Hassanain and Zayed A. Albugami and is entitled, "Towards disaster prevention in community centers: development of a code-based fire risk assessment tool." The paper presents a code-based risk assessment tool for evaluating fire safety measures that can be adapted in the context of community centres whilst providing an exemplar case study from Saudi Arabia to demonstrate its application. The study articulates a systematic approach to raise awareness about fire incidences and consequences in community centres and provides facility managers with a tool to assess compliance based on international fire code requirements. Findings from this study are relevant from policy, practice and public assurance perspective.

Joshin John and Neetha J. Eappen, in their article entitled "Working principle of agile capabilities for emergency response during cyclones and floods", investigate how agile capabilities in humanitarian settings work in combination including their effects on performance outcomes in reference to response operations during cyclones and floods. A survey-based method was used to collect empirical data on response operations from 130 field officers who were involved in disaster response during cyclones or floods. A partial least squares-based structural equation model was used to study the path model of the interaction of agile capabilities and their effect on performance outcomes. Study findings highlighted that integration of agile capabilities is important for enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian response, indicating a serial mediation effect involving visibility, responsiveness and flexibility capability on the effectiveness of emergency response. Clear policy and practitioner implications emerge from this study including avenues for further research.

The important but currently under-researched issue of operational stress injuries (OSIs) to emergency operations centre staff (such as call takers and call dispatchers) is next examined

by Nadine Anik Leduc, Stephen Czarnuch and Rosemary Ricciardelli. In their article entitled "The impacts of leadership behaviours on the mental well-being of public safety communicators", the authors investigated this issue in the Canadian setting. Conducting a 179-item online survey of a Canadian sample comprising 17 validated screenings for occupational stress injuries and symptoms and four open-ended questions relating to their agency's organisational culture, the study thematically analysed participants' open-ended responses and their screening scores. The study revealed that managers and supervisors were significant contributors to negative perceptions of organisational culture, potentially resulting in or worsening existing OSIs. Specifically, leadership was viewed as ineffective, inconsistent, unsupportive, abusive and toxic, with limited understanding of communicator roles. Conversely, positive leaders were described as supportive, communicative and encouraging. Further research into a more compassionate leadership style (s), supporting organisational culture and their corresponding effects on reducing stress on such employees follows from this analysis. Study findings has relevance across wider EMS settings and are supported in the literature (Coxon *et al.*, 2016; Greenberg *et al.*, 2020; Lawn *et al.*, 2020; Wankhade *et al.*, 2018).

Our fifth article is co-authored by Rebecca Stenberg and Maria Wolmesjö and is entitled "Preparative collaboration for missing persons with dementia in Sweden: a pilot study". It explores an interesting phenomenon of preparative collaboration between the police and municipal eldercare in Sweden concerning missing persons with dementia. The findings showed a lack of current collaboration and a reluctance to take on new collaborative initiatives. However, when focussing on the preparative collaboration of coordinated responses to missing incidents, possibilities for improvement could be identified. The improvements concerned updated personnel response checklists, along with suggestions for an elaborate life story document in eldercare, with police access. The study clearly highlights the need for a more dynamic and process-sensitive use of collaboration. With the growing number of callers with mental and health-related issues, these findings attain greater significance for timely response to such callers with significant health needs (Moore *et al.*, 2023; Rodgers *et al.*, 2019).

Our next three articles highlight a specific issue concerning the three main emergency services. First, entitled "Optimization of new fire department location using an improved GIS algorithm for firefighters travel time estimation", by Anas M.M. Awad *et al.*, propose a new method to integrate delay time in the firefighter response time calculation to improve travel time estimation. The paper uses a case study approach to optimise locations for new fire stations in the Sleman district of Yogyakarta province in Indonesia, which has seen an increase in fire incidents. The methodology utilised network analysis in ArcGIS, the analytical hierarchy process (AHP) and simple additive weighting (SAW) to accurately calculate travel time and to identify the best locations for new fire stations. Study findings demonstrated that the total area covered by old and new fire stations decreased from 61% to 31.8% of the study area when the adjusted default speed scenario was implemented. The proposed method provides decision-makers with an effective tool to make informed decisions on optimal locations for new fire stations and thus enhance emergency response and public safety.

In our seventh article, entitled "Perceptions of Australian paramedics following the introduction of professional regulation: a qualitative exploration", Buck Reed *et al.* explore the important issue of professional regulation of paramedics in Australia who became nationally registered in 2018. The study explores the way paramedics interact with their new regulatory environment impacts and is influenced by the professionalisation of the discipline. The study design involved two mixed-method surveys (pre-and post-registration) involving over 400 paramedics. The analysis was undertaken using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). The study findings revealed a mixed picture. Participants broadly supported

registration and saw it as empowering for the profession. Some supported registration but were disappointed by its outcome, and others rejected registration and saw it as divisive and oppressive. Such findings have wider implications with the growing professionalisation agenda in different paramedic settings and are deserving of additional research to track the profession as it continues to evolve (Wankhade and Murphy, 2023; McCann, 2022).

In our final article entitled "The adoption of evidence-based policing: the pivotal role of first-line police leaders across England and Wales", Ian Pepper, Colin Rogers and James Turner review the extant literature to develop a viewpoint identifying challenges and benefits of the adoption of evidence-based policing (EBP) by first-line leaders. The paper argues that first-line leaders, whether police officers, police staff or volunteers, require opportunities to develop their own knowledge, understanding and skills for applying EBP in the workplace. The study provides a framework for understanding the context and potential impact of the educationally levelled formal leadership learning required to champion the broad adoption of EBP across policing within different settings. Such a framework is also applicable across all first-line leader professions such as the ambulance and fire services (Wild *et al.*, 2020).

As we have highlighted previously, *IJES* is included in the Academic Journal Guide 2021 published by the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) as a "*two star*" journal and in the Journal Quality List published by the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) as a "*C*"-rated journal. We owe our gratitude to our authors, reviewers and readers including the wider emergency management community for this recognition in such a short period of time. We are, as always, grateful to our authors who publish in *IJES* and also to other scholars who cite our research.

In 2024, *IJES* will again be represented at major international conferences by sponsoring/ hosting specialist panels/presenting papers on emergency services management by the editors and editorial team. This includes the Annual International Research Society for Public Management (IRSPM) conference being held in Tampere, Finland, in April 2024 and the British Academy of Management (BAM) conference being organised by Nottingham Trent University, UK, in September 2024.

We again renew our call for publishing with us or joining *IJES* as potential reviewers and/ or on the editorial board.

Paresh Wankhade

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