

Objective: To describe the integration of psychologists with emergency medical teams at football games in Portugal during the European Football Championship (EURO 2004).

Methods: The integration of psychologists into 31 emergency medical teams comprised of physicians, nurses, and emergency medical technicians at 31 football games at 10 stadiums in nine Portuguese cities during the European Football Championship (EURO 2004) in June–July 2004 were analyzed.

Results: Up to four psychologists were integrated into each team. Medical assistance was provided to 2,003 patients, of which 190 received psychosocial care. Patients who received psychosocial care suffered from panic attacks, agoraphobia, general anxiety, or anxiety related to a medical condition. Psychosocial assistance included: (1) emotional stabilization of patients and occasionally their families; (2) psycho-educational information and techniques regarding managing their condition; (3) assistance with problem-solving; (4) information about referral services; and (5) telephone follow-up regarding outcomes at a later stage.

Conclusion: Psychologists may be successfully integrated into emergency medical services at mass-gathering events. The provision of prehospital, psychosocial care at mass-gathering events may reduce the number of people with psychological emergencies who require hospital-based, psychosocial care.

Keywords: care; emergency medical technician; mass-gathering event; Portugal; prehospital; psychosocial

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Vulnerabilities of the Public to Disasters in China

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China

How to prevent and manage public health emergencies and disasters has become an important challenge for the Chinese government and the Chinese people. There are serious vulnerabilities with the realities and strategies in coping with disasters (such as the SARS crisis) among the people of China. The public tends to panic when facing disasters, has a weak ability to distinguish between true and false information, a lack of self-discipline, a lack of knowledge on disasters, and a weak social support system. The causes of these vulnerabilities in regards to disasters in China are analyzed. Some policy suggestions are provided to overcome the weaknesses of the public in China.

Keywords: assessment; China; coping strategies; disasters; vulnerabilities

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Integration of a Psychologist into Prehospital Emergency Medical Teams for Early Psychological Intervention: Two Case Reports

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Background: Prehospital emergency medical care workers involved at the scene of a traumatic event are susceptible to a variety of stress-related psychological and emotional sequelae, especially when the victims are children. Although

early psychological intervention, including diagnosis and treatment, may improve long-term psychological outcomes, psychologists have yet to be integrated into prehospital emergency medical care teams on an everyday basis.

Objective: To examine the feasibility of integrating a psychologist into prehospital medical emergency teams for early psychological intervention.

Methods: Two case reports of house fires that produced on-scene deaths of children, in which a psychologist was integrated into the prehospital medical emergency care team, were analyzed. In the first case, the victims included a two year old who died on-scene and a five year old with smoke inhalation. In the second case, the victims included a seven-month-old infant who died on-scene, and five other victims with smoke inhalation (ages one, two, three, five, and 67 years old).

Results: In both cases, a psychologist provided early psychological interventions for the survivors and their families, families of the children who died, and the prehospital emergency medical care workers. Psychological interventions for prehospital emergency medical care workers were aimed at ameliorating symptoms of acute stress reaction, maximizing functionality, providing emotional stabilization, and preventing overload and “burnout”.

Conclusion: The integration of a psychologist into the prehospital emergency medical care team in order to provide early psychological intervention is feasible. It also may improve the immediate and long-term well being of the prehospital emergency medical care team and the community.

Keywords: children; emergency medical care team; interventions; prehospital; psychological; stress; traumatic events

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Role of the Press in the Psychosocial Impact

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Argentina has encountered a number of emblematic events, including two terrorist events, floods, and a plane crash. In each case, journalists became improvised sorceresses, doing a bad job, in some cases, looking for “the impact of the news”. Reporters forgot their primary function: to inform the public precisely about what was going on, establishing a link between the authorities that manage the risk and the most urgent necessities of the community. The Reporter Emergency News Agency (RENA) is the only Latin-American agency specialized in reporting emergencies and catastrophes.

The RENA sends information in electronic format to >1,000 users each week. In a two-year period, 580 reports of investigation relating to the possible prevention of human-made or natural disasters were researched. The RENA reviewed 3,800 articles on 1,710 topics, and journalists conducted research before the occurrence of catastrophes, traveled to damaged areas, and identified experts to obtain relevant information. Journalists sought humanitarian assistance and maintained contact with specialists in