

Reviewer's report

Title: Healthcare Worker Competencies for Disaster Training

Version: 1 **Date:** 26 January 2006

Reviewer: KIMBERLEY I SHOAF

Reviewer's report:

General

This article addresses an important topic in emergency and disaster health. The issue of training healthcare workers to be able to respond to an emergency is currently a priority in the field. This article uses sound research methodology to attempt to address this issue. However, the fact that the literature search was conducted in May 2004 and not updated prior to submission of the article for publication is somewhat problematic in a field that is constantly emerging. Major work in this field, including publication of competencies for hospital workers, nurses, and clinicians has occurred during the time of this project. These competencies were developed by the Columbia School of Nursing, Center for Health Policy as part of a broader competency development program that began with the Competencies for Public Health Workers. This process utilized a similar Modified Delphi Process and included representation from National Organizations involved in Disaster and Emergency Health. This does not mean that this article is not important and cannot contribute to the discussion, however the availability of these competencies cannot be ignored in this article.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Please address the changing nature of the field and the availability of new and competing competencies which have been published since the literature review in 2004. I'm afraid that ignoring this will give informed readers the impression that either you don't know the field or that you intentionally left these out to make your paper seem more important. I doubt that either is the case. The Columbia competencies can be found at <http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nursing/research/ResCenters/chphsr/btcomps.html>

Additionally, the authors briefly mention the need for "mapping" the competencies to target audiences. I feel that the article would be stronger if there were additional discussion of this. How would a clinician in a hospital differ from one in private practice? How would a nurse differ from a physician? Who are the multiple audiences included in the broad field of "health care workers"? Addressing this would contribute more to the ever growing and changing field.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests