

As 2018 draws to a close, we bear witness to a variety of hazards around the globe. Catastrophic incidents such as the Japanese Flooding and Mudslides (July 2018), the daring Cave Rescue mission in Thailand (July 2018), the Indonesian Earthquake and Tsunami (September 2018) and the Hurricane Michael in the USA (October 2018) clearly demonstrate the need to foster better inter-agency collaboration and enhance local and national emergency preparedness. In this issue, the *International Journal of Emergency Services (IJES)* is publishing six original articles that explore search and rescue operations, dealing with blame culture, cost effectiveness in emergency services, leadership mentoring, social media and how volunteers process information during times of tragedy and crisis. These articles seek to close the information gap by making significant contributions to the emergency management literature and the way we view the role of emergency management practitioners.

The first article, “Providing rescue services in remote areas of Estonia”, by Tarmo Puolokainen, Annika Jaansoo and Margo Klaos, provides a systematic analysis of the benefits and risks when a society shifts from the public provision of rescue services to providing it in an extensive co-operation with voluntary rescuers. Such a paradigm shift brought in an extensive network of voluntary fire and rescue brigades and enhanced the scope and effectiveness of the service provided. Findings from this study offer real-world implementation insight to other practitioners, while planning a change in service provision/provider understanding.

Our second article, “The safe tweet: social media use by Ontario Fire Services”, fills a literature gap by addressing how social media communicates information about all three lines of defence against fire. The authors, Sharon Lauricella and Kirsty-Lynn Pankhurst, while identifying both efficient and inefficient use of social media, hope to invite positive and meaningful innovation in how fire services staff use social media to educate the public about safety and fire prevention.

Sparingly populated wilderness and wildland areas pose a unique challenge for rescue planners and rescue unit operations managers. Our third article, “Network analysis for search areas in WiSAR operations”, authored by Sebastian Drexel, Suzanne Zimmermann-Janschitz and Robert Koester, is set in the European Alps where network analysis and GPS are being employed to assist in scientifically advancing the accuracy of search and rescue missions. The aim of the project is to increase that chance of survival for persons missing in mountainous terrains where geotechnical tools are critical in providing assistance to search planners. The study has implications for similar rescue operations undertaken in a wide variety of setting across different countries.

Often, disasters have little context until survivors, volunteers or first responders provide contextual meaning to the phenomena. In our next article, “A need to help: stories of emergent behaviour from the scene of accident”, author Linda Kvarnlóf analyses emergent behaviours and norms as part of everyday emergencies such as traffic accidents where spontaneous volunteers can play an important role by filling the void before the arrival of emergency services. In her analysis, she argues that study participants frame actions through norms of how one should act, while framing their own actions in presenting themselves as a person of a certain type, sometimes positioned against an real or imaginative “other” when faced with disaster or crisis.

Using a qualitative approach to capitalise on nuanced shades of meaning, the fifth article, “The impact of blame culture on paramedic practice: a qualitative study exploring English and Finnish paramedic perceptions”, by Andrew Kirk, Kevin Armstrong, Niina Nurkka and



Annette Jinks, compares the perceptions of the healthcare blame culture, to find similar data themes for both groups of English and Finish participants who argue that the healthcare blame culture is widespread and directly influences paramedics in the field. This paper breaks new ground in that it employs a never before observed groups to engage in discussion that directly reflect on how they perform their duties as they wrestle with the “blame culture” and the fear of litigation in an age of social media. Such fears in the emergency medical profession can lead to defensive practice in emergency departments.

The final article by Jenni Jones, entitled “How can leaders and managers in the police support the learning of others and at the same time, support their own?” uses a longitudinal qualitative case study approach with semi-structured interviews and focus groups to understand how both mentees and mentors perceive the learning within the mentoring relationship. Insights from this study suggest that there is learning through mentoring and both parties need to be encouraged as a means to support both professional and personal development into the future.

In 2019, we are continuously building our association with academics and practitioners alike, at major international conferences by sponsoring/hosting specialist panels on emergency services management across the globe. During 16-19 April 2019, *IJES* will travel to New Zealand for a sponsored panel on emergency services management (led by Professor Wankhade) at the 23rd Annual International Research Society for Public Management (IRSPM) conference hosted by Victoria University, New Zealand. In Europe, Professor Wankhade is leading a specialist panel on the emergency services at the Annual European Academy of Management (EURAM) conference organised by ISCTE-IUL in Lisbon, Portugal from 26-28 June 2019. In North America, *IJES* will participate in the 20th Annual Emergency Management Higher Education Symposium in 2019 in Emmitsburg, Maryland and at the 45th Annual Mid-South Sociological Association (MSSA), October 2019. Also, Professor Miller is organising an academic session at the “Families Amidst Global and Local Processes: Economic, Political and Cultural Change” Symposium of Research Committee #06 of the International Sociological Association in June 2019 in Rhodes, Greece.

As we reflect on 2018 and enter 2019, our eight year of publication, the editors wish to thank our reviewers who have worked so hard and given their valuable time to make the *IJES* a leading voice in the discipline. We remain true to our mission by providing a scholarly platform for cutting-edge scholarship in the management of all emergency services, including universal services such as fire and rescue, police and ambulance services as well as more specialized services such as the Coastguard, air-sea or mountain rescue at all stages of the disaster cycle. Additional, we thank the authors, reviewers and readers in supporting *IJES*. The scholarly and scientific peer reviews form the foundation of *IJES* and helps us publish high-quality research. We value the comments and feedback from our readers and invite suggestions for future themes, topics and expressions of interest for special issues. We again renew our call for publishing with us or joining *IJES* as potential reviewers and/or on the editorial board.

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