

The Utstein-Style Template for Uniform Data Reporting of Acute Medical Response in Disasters

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The March 12, 2012 publication of the *Utstein-Style Template for Uniform Data Reporting of Acute Medical Response in Disasters*¹ represents an important advancement for disaster medical research. The document was generated by the Emergency Management and Disaster Medicine Academy (EMDM Academy) using the Utstein style for developing medical consensus statements. The Template provides the disaster and acute medical response community with standardized definitions and measurable outcome indicators. There was broad support for development of the Template, with funding from the EMDM Academy, the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University Hospital Brussels, the Research Group on Emergency and Disaster Medicine at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and the Laerdal Foundation for Acute Medicine.

The newly published Acute Medical Response Utstein Template adds to previous important works that define terms and data elements necessary for uniform research, evaluation, and education in the field of disaster medical sciences. Previous work by the Task Force on Quality Control of Disaster Management of the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM) and The Nordic Society for Disaster Medicine, published in 2003, provided guidelines and structure for the evaluation and research of health disaster management.² This key work, edited by Dr. Knut Ole Sundnes and Dr. Marvin Birnbaum, formed the foundation for standardized reporting of data related to disaster medicine and established the standards for uniform reporting of data.

In 2010, Dr. Per Kulling and co-authors published the *Guidelines for Reports on Health Crises and Critical Health Events*.³ This work was based on over three decades of experience in reporting on acute health crises by the Swedish KAMEDO project. The paper refined the original work edited by Sundnes

and Birnbaum to give specific guidelines for structured reporting of acute health events.

A persistent challenge in disaster medical research and evaluation has been a lack of adherence to defined standards for collecting and reporting of data. The Acute Medical Response Utstein Template addresses this issue by proposing accurate and comparable terminology for reporting and analysis of the acute medical response phase for disasters. The Template also provides measurable outcome indicators for elements of acute medical response during disasters. Validation of the Template for reporting of actual events is an important next step for advancing disaster medical science. It is recommended that disaster medical researchers and evaluators adopt as appropriate for their specific data the Acute Medical Response Utstein Template as well as the WADEM/Nordic Society Guidelines and the Guidelines for Reports on Health Crises and Critical Health Events.

A significant question is whether the newly published Acute Medical Response Utstein Template will have the desired impact of improving the science and knowledge for disaster medical response. This question can only be answered by the future use and justification of the Template.

The three sets of guidelines referred to above provide defined terminology, conceptual frameworks, and outcome indicators for the study of disaster medical response. Disaster medical professionals should be familiar with these works. It is expected that future disaster medical response research will adopt these Guidelines and Template. It is the intent of the Editorial Staff that, when appropriate, future *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* publication of disaster and acute medical response papers will use the standardized reporting methods discussed in this editorial.

References

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