

Bridging the Gap: Communicating with Emergency Management Professionals in the Midst of Climate-Related Disasters

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Abstract

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Abstract

Objective: The objective of this research is to assess how New York City Health + Hospitals emergency management professionals (EMPs) perceive climate change-related events, to a.) improve communication for increased receptivity and b.) identify gaps in perceived risks.

Methods: The study surveys EMPs from 13 geographically different healthcare facilities in NYC about their perceptions on climate change and its related emergency scenarios, preferred information sources on climate change, and the best modes of communication during climate-related extreme weather events.

Results: The results of this study support a.) the importance of official hospital-system guidance regarding climate risks b.) the use of a diverse array of terminology, including messaging that refrains from the phrase 'climate change' and instead refers to the 'future' c.) the incorporation of clear actionable deliverables and d.) the inclusion of expert voices into messaging. Overall, recent events and upcoming seasonal hazards appear to affect perception of risk more than objective measures. Knowledge of city and temporal factors that impact perceived risk can be mobilized to harness engagement.

Conclusions: The results of this study inform best practices for climate communications to EMPs, critical in preparing our health systems for future climate disasters.

Supplementary material. The supplementary material for this article can be found at <http://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2024.229>.