RICOMET 2015

Risk perception, communication and ethics of exposures to ionising radiation

Session 5 Communication in nuclear emergencies

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Main topics

- Key factors influencing the psychological dynamics in areas affected by an accident
  - Lessons for risk communication learned from the Fukushima accident and other large scale non-nuclear events
- Emergency plans: confronting paper plans with reality
  - Local communities
    - Involvement in the evaluation of emergency planning (Be)
    - Awareness of and compliance with evacuation procedures (Si)
  - Public evaluation of emergency plans in European countries
    - White paper and report of Nuclear Transparency Watch
- Communication sources and channels and public perception of IR in several EU countries
  - Findings from the EAGLE project
- Legal considerations

Conclusions (1)

- Nowadays risks "dip under borders"

- Family/community networks influence individual response to events
  ➔ need to map social networks in areas at risk

- Emergency planning must include campaigns targeting

  - those hardest to reach (e.g. by recognising their individualistic values)

  - reassure already concerned individuals/groups: usually those high in conservative, e.g. traditional values).

- Social media can be very helpful (e.g. for motivating actions), but might also have negative consequences (e.g. discrimination) and its use might lead to increased anxiety

  - ➔ monitor and react

  - ➔ ethical code for use in emergency situations?

- Communicating is not just about providing knowledge – but about tackling lay beliefs and concerns

Conclusions (2)

- Nuclear risk evaluation and management needs to address complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity

- Optimisation of emergency response has different meaning for different actors

- Emergency plans are often not realistic and their efficiency over-estimated → there is a need to provide room for:

  - Involvement of citizens in emergency exercises and reviews of emergency plans

  - Dialogue between key stakeholders

  - Assessing the awareness of and feasibility of protective actions in areas at risk

- ETI and communication strategies should take into account lessons identified after the Fukushima accident

  - Institutional sources of information should be proactive in providing information in case of a nuclear emergency

  - Providing technical information in understandable way was a challenge: is this information available now?