

Resources for Disaster Preparedness

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Welcome, to this class on Information Resources for Disaster Preparedness, offered by NN/LM Mid-Atlantic Region. My name is Emily Molanphy, I'm the web services librarian at the NYU Health Sciences Libraries and I'm also a member of our library's Disaster Preparedness Informationist project team.

Introduction

- Today's class is designed to assist medical librarians in learning key resources that they can share with users involved in disaster preparedness planning and/or have ready to use/offer in an actual emergency
- Will focus on key web sites and a selection of specialized databases, and also present some resources for wireless devices
- Slides will be made available and will include URLs and sample searches, so don't worry about jotting them down

Parameters

- What kinds of disasters are we talking about?
 - Natural *and* man-made
 - Sudden *or* predictable
 - Floods, epidemics, terrorist attacks, hurricanes, infrastructure failures
 - Increase in number of patients
 - Different/unusual medical needs
 - Communication needs – the worried well
 - Logistical needs – consider an elevator breakdown
 - Identifying and responding to a variety of new situations
- You'll need to know
 - What kind of information might your users ask for
 - What is your institution preparing for? Pandemic flu maybe, tsunamis not so much?
 - Where is that information available?
 - What format is easy for them to use
 - Some resources are good for in-depth information during your research and planning; others are good for quick information in an actual emergency. Not too many are good at both!
- There is a lot out there, so I'll try to show some highlights and also talk about what makes these resources especially worthwhile
- *Not* about planning for disasters at your library; will point out a few resources for that at the end

- Also not about disaster planning on an individual level, i.e. packing a “go bag” or providing for pets, but I’ll mention when sites we’re discussing include information like that.

Web site overview,

FEMA: www.fema.gov Federal Emergency Management Agency

- The site is also being renovated and the new version should be unveiled later this year.
- Consumer-oriented, disaster-specific information and resources can be found on the right hand side of the page in the “Types of Disasters” section.
- Other useful sources of information can be found on “Customer Gateways” on the left hand side of the page. – Look at emergency personnel and **Professional** sections—no info on medical issues but some stuff about logistical planning and grant applications that may interest some users.

<http://www.fema.gov/library/index.jsp>

- Clicking “Forms and Publications” under “Quick Links” on the left hand side of the page brings you to the FEMA Library.
- Resources include consumer-friendly information like fact sheets but also technical information, such as specifications for building structures for escaping tsunamis.
- Many resources and publications available online at no cost but many are not and must be ordered- some have fees.
- Keyword searches may have no results, whereas subject and hazard searches have too many, and you can’t preview—have to combine and use trial and error to get what you want
- Children + risk assessment + educational institutes + virus threat
- FEMA may be best known for its consumer-oriented projects
- Worthwhile to know where to find information that is geared towards public
- Why? Affected patients, hospital staff and general public or if working with community relations/liason team or hospital emergency managers.
- The main resource for that is ready.gov, which includes sections aimed at individuals, business, kids, and “listo.gov” a Spanish-language version that also has sections for individuals, business, and kids
- These include information on kits, escape plans, where to go, how to shelter, continuity planning, etc. Mostly not health-related.
- Notice that there’s a blog here

<http://www.disasterassistance.gov/>

- This DHS/FEMA site helps guide affected individuals through the process of registering for the various federal aid programs.
- A “one stop shop” for over 50 aid sources from 17 different federal agencies.
- Click on “Disaster Assistance” on the upper tool bar.
- The site suggests for best results to take the questionnaire.
- Searching can also be done “By Category” or “By Federal Agency”

- “By Category” link probably more useful- doesn’t require background knowledge of various federal agencies and their aid programs.

CDC: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/>

- CDC has wide range of public health info, e.g. a page about the Super Bowl warning not to eat contaminated peanut butter products or drink and drive.
- Emergency Preparedness and Response is one of the major sections of the site, with its own landing page
- In most sections, they divide the information into boxes clearly labeled as info for the general public versus info for professionals. In some of the categories, there is more info for the public than for professionals. What you find in each section differs from other sections, in terms of depth of coverage.
- Some of the information is very concrete. Bring attention to just one: management of blast injuries under Mass Casualties -> Lung injury prehospital care
- Under Recent, they have an RSS feed and even a Twitter account

NLM pages about Chemical and Biological Warfare:

<http://disaster.nlm.nih.gov/enviro/biologicalwarfare.html>

- These pages both contain comprehensive lists of resources, from definitions to planning guides to one-click TOXNET and PubMed searches, journal articles, etc.
- Lots of information but not as much consideration for format/point-of-use.
- Also links to other portals—can be an issue in this field, that you’re just looking at list of links to other lists of links. But this is one of the better ones to bookmark.
- The best part of this page is the section that focuses on specific diseases. These also contain PubMed searches.

<http://disaster.nlm.nih.gov/enviro/chemicalwarfare.html>

- Very similar to the previous page except that the PubMed searches are grouped together, further down the page, not right with the links about the substances.
- Both of these are linked from this page:

<http://disaster.nlm.nih.gov/enviro/envirohealthlinks.html>

- Where NLM posts pages specific to emerging situations such as the California wildfires and the TVA coal ash spill:

<http://disaster.nlm.nih.gov/enviro/coalashspill.html>

MedlinePlus Biodefense and Bioterrorism page:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/biodefenseandbioterrorism.html>

possibly not worthwhile—too consumer-oriented?

Isolation and Quarantine toolkit: <http://www.isolationandquarantine.com/>

- Designed by Seattle and King County Public Health to help other jurisdictions devise plans for isolation and quarantine.

- Subject with many aspects: medical, legal, and social
- This resource doesn't just hand you a quarantine plan. What it does is guide you through the process of asking the right questions and making the right connections to formulate a plan that is legal and appropriate for your jurisdiction.
- It also shows how you can take information that may seem too local to be worth sharing, and put it in a format that others can benefit from.
- Librarians may not need to create such a plan, but example of the kind of resource you can point your users to if you become involved in their research
- By keeping up with blogs and listservs, you may find other resources like this that are interest to your users

And also check out...

- This class is only supposed to be an hour, so there were a few things that are worth knowing about, but I won't have time to show you how to navigate.
- MedlinePlus has a page on Disaster Preparation and Recovery. Like some of the FEMA pages, this information is mostly geared towards personal safety. It also has links to some of the resources we're looking at today.
- PandemicFlu.gov brings together information about the dangers of pandemic influenza from a number of different government sources. Like the CDC pages we looked at, it mixes information for the public and for professionals. Many reports about what is being done to monitor flu. At the bottom it has links to interesting historical material about the 1918 influenza pandemic.
- Health Library for Disasters has been put together by the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization. Contains mainly technical reports and training materials. Many items available in Spanish. Topic matter may be a little scattershot for our users, because it considers case studies of worldwide disasters, wars, refugee situation, and so forth.

Specialized database searching, coverage and sample searches

TOXNET: <http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/>

- TOXNET is a resource that you've probably heard of or used
- It's a collection of toxicology and environmental health databases
- You may also be familiar with TOXTOWN, a consumer-oriented companion to TOXNET.
- The databases that are included are all listed on the left, so you can check the scope of each one. It also has a sample search or record so you can preview the kind of information it contains—nice touch.
- Recommend generally using the option to search all databases, because some of them will have no results, depending on your term
- If you search something like "ricin," an extremely poisonous protein of the castor bean, you will get an overwhelming number of results

- Try something like “ricin inhalation” or “botulinum terrorism”
- With searches related to terrorism, you’re likely to get results primarily from Toxline, since some of the other databases have to do with medications, longterm exposure to household chemicals, and so forth.
- Notice that some results will also take you into PubMed.
- Another search to try is “aldicarb,” a very toxic pesticide. This is something that people might come into contact with in the context of a natural disaster like a flood. You’ll see that it gets results from a variety of the other databases.
- You’ll notice when looking at the records that most of the materials you discover with this tool are good for research and planning. This isn’t really a “grab it in an emergency” tool. We’ll look at another tool covering similar material a little later.

QUAKELINE: <http://mceer.buffalo.edu/utilities/quakeline.asp>

- QUAKELINE is a bibliographic database that covers earthquakes, earthquake engineering, natural hazard and disaster mitigation. Includes journal articles, technical reports, books and media.
- The "Help" screen has easy to follow instructions:
- http://mceer.buffalo.edu/infoservice/Quakeline_Database/help.asp#2-help
- A simple video tutorial is also available:
- http://mceer.buffalo.edu/infoservice/QKLN_tutorial/tutorial.asp
- In the regular search, you can include up to six keywords, which are ANDed together, or you can use quotation marks to search for a phrase. In the “Advanced Search” option, up to four keywords or phrases can be searched at once using Boolean operators from a pulldown menu. You can also limit by date (year) or range.
- Search 1 a. "crush injury" as a phrase:
- MEDICAL CARE OF ENTRAPPED PATIENTS IN CONFINED SPACES.
- Look at IDs on detail page... this database uses “crush syndrome” as a subject term.
- Search 1 a. "crush syndrome " as a phrase: (BETTER)
- Because this resource has very specific subjects, this is an approach that can be helpful
- You can select records (click in box to the left of the reference) to make them printer-friendly or for manual export.
- Just some notes on the scope of this resource: Strengths are more in the area of engineering and structural related issues rather than direct medical care. Journal articles related to medicine may be less current than what you would find elsewhere.
- Their "Information Service" page with news and other information also is useful: <http://mceer.buffalo.edu/infoservice/default.asp> --no RSS feed though!

HazLit: <http://ibs.colorado.edu/hazards/library/hazlit/NatHazSearch.php>

- Database that focuses on the social science aspects of natural disasters and catastrophic events
- As you can see, simple and advanced search interfaces are presented on the same page
- The search mechanism is a little strange
- First, you have to remember to choose a field to search, doesn't default to anything
- Next, you can type in something to search by title or author.
- It looks as though you could type in a keyword, but you can't. If you want to choose a keyword, you have to pick one from the pulldown menu, which makes them somewhat more like subject headings.
- If you type in something as a keyword and try to search, it will return something, but it will be confusing.
- With keywords, it might be better to do a keyword multifield search.
- Try something like KW "disaster medicine" and KW "higher education"
- Note that, even if "all words" is chosen at the top, you still have to make sure AND is chosen between the two fields.
- Also, note that this database includes a lot of citations from the '80s and '90s. If you have too many results searching something like KW "", limiting by date will be an easy way to whittle that down.

Brief mention not to forget PubMed and standard OVID databases for completeness' sake

Wireless or mobile resources

NLM's WISER: <http://wiser.nlm.nih.gov/>

- WISER stands for the Wireless information system for emergency responders
- It's available in two forms, as a downloadable application for Windows mobile/Palm/desktop Windows
- This is important because of the possibility of connectivity failure--you'd have the entire resource locally
- Also available on the web, though, as Web WISER, which we will look at
- Accesses same functions and can be used on mobile phones as long as you still have a connection
- Two modes: Identify unknown substances or find documentation on a known substance
- Allows you to get information on how to respond (and how NOT to respond) based on readily identifiable characteristics of the substance itself or symptoms of those exposed to it

- Example properties: solid, crystalline + almond-like odor + blackish
- Results count goes down to show you when you're getting to a browseable number
- Antimony: may react explosively with water
- Identify based on symptoms rather than properties of the substance itself
- Example: high body temp + slurred speech + rapid breathing
- Notice that there is also a way to limit your search according the placards of the vehicle carrying the substance
- You can combine these... properties with symptoms with placards.
- Look at ethyl acetate. You can see all the information provided on this substance.
- Basic > Major uses , Medical > Treatment overview
- Details for IDing it, precautions for first responders, uses (aroma enhancer in grape juices?), cleanup methods
- And remember, you can download all this info to a mobile device
- Ideal combination of subject and format

REMM: <http://www.remm.nlm.gov/>

- Radiation Event Medical Management
- New resource launched in 2008
- Sort of a brother to WISER
- Chiefly directed at physicians with a goal of giving them evidence-based information that they can act on without prior formal training in this area
- There is one section with limited advice for other users such as first responders, hospitals, and public information officers
- Information is delivered in small chunks, but includes references to the literature, taking you straight to research papers in PubMed
- Really a great example of the kind of information organization and delivery we need in this area. The creators of this resource thought in terms of format and time constraints as well as subject, but they also came up with a mechanism to go deeper into the information
- Best feature—can be downloaded, which makes a lot of sense considering that communications failures often accompany disasters. Can also download a mobile version, but be aware that it has a limited number of files.
- Local copy runs in the browser, just like a regular web page
- Descriptions of how radiation events can occur, such as when something goes wrong in the transportation of nuclear material, or a dirty bomb. These sections have varying information and some are longer than others. Some just describe what the event is, whereas the transportation page goes into some detail about how to set up a command and identify the type and level of exposure. The dirty

- bomb page talks about what kinds of radioactive material are most likely to be used in a dirty bomb.
- Look especially at the triage page
 - Algorithms for treatment of exposure and contamination, in children and adults
 - Sample triage algorithm: START, very simple chart about what to do, but with references. Also triage tag, actually usable in an emergency.
 - These guidelines are important because they are such rare events. Even people who have been trained to deal with these situations don't use that training regularly. Provides very clearcut information that can be acted on immediately.

Keeping up

- As I've mentioned, this is an area that is growing rapidly, and it can be very challenging to keep up with all the resources.
- One particular problem is that many institutions put together lists of resources, that you may already be familiar with, so it's hard to identify what's actually new.
- Wanted to mention some strategies for keeping up and filtering the information.
- Use simple online tools to help you keep track of resources you discover as you're exploring
- For example: we use Delicious to keep track of web pages:
<http://delicious.com/nyudisprep>
- Where was that page about decontamination and children?
- You can use an RSS feeder to grab feeds you want to follow. Add them as you encounter them so you don't have to remember where you saw them. It's easier to unsubscribe later than to remember where you saw something.
- PubMed –save search as an alert

Briefly: disaster planning at your library

- NN/LM MAR does a class on service continuity and planning—was already offered earlier this spring but keep an eye out for it again
- <http://nmlm.gov/ep/> - links, ideas, stories--something you could follow in RSS
- <http://www.dplan.org> - template that leads you to prepare a comprehensive disaster plan for your library and collection

Closing

- Class is an overview of resources, encourage to continue exploring on your own
- Invitation to contact RML for assistance at any time
- I'd like to thank the Disaster Preparedness Team at NYU Health Sciences Libraries, the NN/LM MAR team for setting up this class, and Marcus Banks, who taught an earlier version of this class and has been helpful in keeping up to date with all the resources available in this growing field

- Thank you for your time and interest