

4. Building a detailed operation plan and ensure that all personnel are familiar with the plan;
5. Performing structured drills and simulations; and
6. Performing professional lessons-learned sessions to allow for the ongoing improvement of preparedness for an unconventional MCE.

Results: Drills testing the readiness of the hospital for an unconventional MCE should improve patient treatment during an actual event.

Keywords: drill; mass-casualty incident; plan; preparedness; unconventional mass-casualty incident

Prehosp Disaster Med

The Israel Defense Forces Secondary Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Prevention Program for Casualty Notification Officers

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The Personnel Wing of the Israel Defense Force (IDF) developed two unique officers' roles for the management of grieving families of soldiers who die during their military service. One is the "Casualties Officer", officers who are in charge of the permanent treatment of these families by the IDF. The other is the "Casualty Notification Officer", volunteer reserve officers whose task is to bear the bad news to the family and treat the family during the military funeral and until the end of the first week of mourning. The psychological burden on these officers necessitated the formation of a special prevention program, in order to avoid the development of secondary post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms.

The Casualty Notification Officers secondary PTSD prevention includes several components: (1) a professional preparatory course, in which the appropriate methods of bearing the grave news and the immediate treatment of the grieving family are taught; (2) every notification is handled by a team, consisting of two officers and a physician—inexperienced officers accompany such teams first, then become the "second officer", until they feel experienced enough to become the Casualty Notification Officer; (3) the load of the notifications is divided between many reserve officers; and (4) there is a debriefing session with a psychologist following each event experienced in this field.

Even though most officers report being stressed each time they break the sad news of death of a soldier to his or her family, none had to receive psychological or psychiatric treatment. All the Casualty Notification Officers volunteers are pre-screened, gradually prepared for this delicate mission, and whose mental state is monitored following each notification, which adds to the success of the secondary PTSD prevention program.

Keywords: Casualty Notification Officer; grieving; post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); prevention; volunteer

Prehosp Disaster Med

The Military Role in a, Influenza Pandemic

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Background: Pandemic influenza is a major challenge to emergency preparedness agencies and health systems around the world. It requires preparation for widespread morbidity due to influenza and its complications, which will lead to huge burden on the health system in the community and in hospitals, as well as work absenteeism among healthcare personnel. The army may have a major involvement in preparedness for and tackling of such an event. The different roles armies could take in such a crisis will be reviewed, and the Israeli test case will be presented.

Results: Defense systems are characterized by a few attributes that may provide major advantages during pandemic influenza: crisis management capacities, ability to cope with varied tasks in suboptimal conditions, logistical resources, widespread deployment, and ability to activate people, even against their will, in risky situations. The army's roles during a pandemic could include: (1) national and regional command of the event; (2) workforce for essential civilian missions; (3) use of logistic and military resources; (4) keeping public order; and (5) implementing public health measures such as isolation and quarantine. The army must continue its primary role of guarding the security of the state.

Discussion: Since the March 2009, the influenza virus A/2009 H1N1 spread around the world, leading the World Health Organization to declare it a pandemic influenza. According to the Israeli preparedness plan, the management of the event was supposed to be by the defense system. Due to the moderate severity of the illness, it was decided to leave the management to the health system. In view of the necessity of maintaining military combat capabilities, and the possibility of outbreaks in combat units, the Israeli Defense Forces policy for the pandemic was stricter than the Ministry of Health policy.

Conclusions: Defense systems should prepare for the possibility of a more severe pandemic, in which the army may take a major role, especially if regular life is disturbed.

Keywords: influenza; military; pandemic

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