Core community-level influences fostering proactive preparedness

Petra T Buerbelt, Patrick D. Dunlop, Carmen Lawrence & David L. Morrison
School of Psychology, University of Western Australia, Western Australia

Research Questions

This research addresses two substantial gaps in the disaster literature by answering:

Q1: What are crucial community-level preparedness activities & how can they objectively assessed?

Q2: What community characteristics influence individual & community preparedness?

Unit of Analysis

Community is a highly ambiguous construct with multiple layers. We choose as unit of analysis:

Local Government

- closest form of government to the public
- primary responsibility for preparing & responding
- authority to implement & reinforce state laws/regulations and to develop own

Research Design

Because little is known in this area we started with qualitative research:

Data Collection:
- episodic interviews → narrative & conceptual knowledge
- participant observation → actions/interactions & taken for granted
- knowledge

Q1: Core Community-level Preparedness Activities

Participants & Sampling:
- purposeful & snowballing
- 15 community members & leaders
- Length: 32.24 h (average: 2.09 h)

Analysis:
- grounded theory analysis techniques
- qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti

Q2: Key Actors

Community & Individual variables

Can Prepare
- self-efficacy, support, outcome expectancy
- knowledge, physical abilities & practical skills
- perceived costs & laws/regulations

Reasons to Prepare
- growing up &/or living in LG
- having sense of belonging & attachment
- recognising interdependence → reciprocity
- accepting responsibility for self & others
- risk perception & identifying need
- using of capabilities & making a difference
- leaving-staying decision & reinforcing

Central theme: Community spirit
Process: Negotiating responsibility-trust-respect between community members & leaders

Local Government
- safety priority culture & climate
- attracting & selecting “good/right” people
- collaboration & cross-functional teams
- two-way communication, requesting & using local knowledge, developing capacities,
- supporting, acknowledging, monitoring

Can Prepare
- passion, joy, fulfilment, & peace of mind
- anxiety/worry/concerns & apathy

Goals/Envisioned Future
- keeping self & family safe
- building safe, enjoyable, vibrant community
- expanding self (knowledge & skills)

Next Steps

- finalising questionnaires developed based on qualitative data
- testing the model empirically

Degree of preparedness at the community-level & degree to which LG communicate what they do & plan to do influences individual preparedness directly & indirectly.