



## 6<sup>th</sup> WSES Congress 2019

**Title: Medical coordination and nursing perspectives on emergency mass casualty and terrorism preparedness in the Netherlands, a qualitative study.**

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**Topic: Healthcare organization and mass casualty**

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**Background:**

Mass casualty incidents, specifically incidents with chemical biological radiological and nuclear agents (CBRN) or terrorist attacks, challenge medical coordination, rescue, availability and adequate provision prehospital and hospital based emergency care. In the Netherlands, recently a new model for emergency preparedness for large scale mass casualties and terrorist attacks was introduced (2016).

**Aim:**

To provide insight in the first experiences of medical coordination rescue members and ambulance nurses with this new approach in order to identify strengths and pitfalls in prehospital emergency care.

**Methods:**

The study had a qualitative design and was performed between January 2017 and June 2018. We used purposeful sampling and included medical coordination rescue members and ambulance nurses (n=28). We performed semi structured interviews and used a topic list that was based on



the literature and content of the new introduced models. All interviews were typed out verbatim and qualitative content analyzed was used to identify relevant themes.

**Results:**

The main issues raised by the respondents included the following.

- The six points of departure in the CBRN model and terrorist attack approach ('1 safety first, 2 do the most for the most; 3 scoop and run; 4 acceptable risk for rescue members; 5 never walk alone, 6 standard operational procedure) were supported;
- Newly introduced definitions in the models were lacking clarity;
- Awareness of optimal personal safety, specifically for the CBRN and terrorism attack approach, was absent.
- Several rescue workers did not feel competent to perform newly introduced tasks, such as the command and control of the first ambulance arriving on scene and the medical coordination task of emergency transport by the dispatch nurse.
- Current regional differences in preparedness, potentially complicate and compromise interregional collaboration during mass casualties and terrorist attacks.

**Discussion:**

As the models were introduced recently, perspectives and experiences were primarily based on design and outcome of disaster exercises and not on real time casualties. In order to ensure an unambiguous approach in a real time mass scale casualties or terrorist attacks, systematic planning and evaluation of disaster exercises and real time events should include evaluation of the identified issues.

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**Position presenting author:** underlined

**Word count of abstract body:** maximal 350 words