The access of communication for the Deaf population during national disasters – A comparative study between four countries.

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National emergency situations such as natural disasters have marred humanity throughout history. The content of natural disasters comprises geographical disasters (earthquakes, volcanoes etc.) and climate-related disasters (coastal flooding, storm surge etc). The latter have dramatically increased since 1970's (Leaning and Guha-Sapir, 2013; Brooks and Adger, 2003). Death, disabilities and disease outbreaks caused by ecologic shifts are some of the results brought about by these disasters. Often the deaf population receives important information concerning national emergencies later than the hearing population (ex. Rijksoverheid, 2011), causing situations that should and could be prevented, such as death.

The main focus of this paper is on the deaf population in four countries (Greece, Netherlands, Sweden and USA). The authors directs the spotlight on the communication process of alerting the local deaf community during emergency situations. Some of the examples include utilizing text messaging service and the use of sign language interpreters. The communication services appear to vary per country and an exchange of expertise will lead to greater efficiency. The USA is the only country with a specialized training for interpreters in national emergency situations.

The researchers will work as an interprofessional and international team to identify an effective plan for the deaf population in cases of emergency.

This paper is suggested to be presented at workshop B: Interprofessionality.

References

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Rijksoverheid, 2011, Antwoorden kamervragen over extra risico voor doven en slechthorenden bij de brand van chemie pack in Moerdijk.