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| http://careers.thelancet.com/r/company/logos/689845/logo.jpgcid:image001.png@01D172FB.48F8AEB0  **Comparative Study** **Control Group Participant Information Sheet****Enhancing emergency preparedness through improved exercises and training: a comparative study to understand the effect of emergency preparedness exercises on participants learning, emergency preparedness and abilities to respond in a major incident.**Thank you very much for considering taking part in this study. Before you decide to take part, it is important that you understand why the study is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully, and contact us if there is anything that is unclear, or if you would like more information.**Who is taking part in this project?**PHE Emergency Response Department (ERD) takes part in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Health Protection Research Unit (EPR HPRU) research projects funded by the Department of Health National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). This project is one of the NIHR HPRU projects and is undertaken in collaboration with King’s College London. **What is the purpose of this study?**The aims of this project are to identify, understand and explicate the ways in which professionals learn from emergency exercises and how this affects their emergency preparedness, and to utilize the collected evidence to contribute to the design of effective emergency preparedness exercises conducted by PHE. **How is the study going to be conducted?**The project involves two stages:*Stage one:* at stage one qualitative interviews were completed with 26 professionals immediately after their participation in a PHE emergency preparedness exercise to explore their experiences and to understand the factors which may facilitate their learning from the exercises. Follow up interviews at 4-6 months post-exercise explored the knowledge retention and transferability to working practices including real emergency responses.*Stage two*: at stage two of this study the data obtained from the interviews is utilized to suggest strategies to optimise learning potential from emergency exercises. A comparative study will then compare learning outcomes for participants from modified and standard exercises immediately post exercise and then at 6 and 12 months post exercise to study for any changes in learning over time as well as the exercise’s impact on health care providers abilities to respond in a real incident, if such an event has taken place between the exercise and any of the follow up assessments. **How is the Comparative Study going to be conducted?** Participants in four regional PHE ERD table top exercises conducted between June – September 2017 will be invited to take part. Two exercises will be allocated to Standard group and the other two exercises will be in the Modified group. There will also be a Control group of health care providers who haven’t attended any PHE exercise in the last six months. The Standard group exercises will be delivered in the usual way by the ERD Exercise team, while the Modified group exercises will include educational modifications designed by the project researchers.Assessments of participants will be conducted pre- and post-exercise to check our hypothesis that modified exercises will generate greater learning outcomes than standard exercises, and standard exercises will demonstrate more benefit that no exercise. To understand the knowledge retention from the Standard and Modified groups, the assessments will be repeated 6 and 12 months post-exercise. **What will be involved if I take part in this study?**As you are not attending the NHS regional table top exercise, you are invited to join the control group, if you have not attended a PHE exercise in the last 6 months. As a control group participant, you will be asked to sign a Consent form and to complete an-online questionnaire four times: pre-exercise, post-exercise, 6 months and 12 months post-exercise – matching the questionnaire time-points of the exercise participant groups. Each questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes.*Pre-exercise assessment*The pre-exercise questionnaire will check for participants’ perceptions of their emergency competency-based knowledge and skills, as well as explore participants’ perceptions of the adequacy of their emergency training, confidence in their ability to respond in emergency, perceptions of personal and organisational emergency preparedness, perceptions of team preparedness, adequacy of emergency plans , appropriateness of resources and perceived level of stress associated with emergency response. Participants will also answer questions related to their understanding of the purpose and objectives of the exercise, perceptions of the relevance of objectives and the perceived value of the exercise in their emergency preparedness. Control group will only be asked to complete the participants’ perception section of the survey.*Post-exercise assessment*In addition to the pre-exercise questions participants will also be asked to provide their detailed feedback on the exercise, including clarity and relevance of objectives, relevance and realism of scenario, quality of facilitators, quality of plenary sessions and personal satisfaction with the exercise. Control group will only be asked to complete the participants’ perception section of the survey.*Assessment Questionnaire*The assessment questionnaire was specifically designed for this study to measure participants’ perceptions. The design involved identifying variables via systematic reviews, validation of the questionnaire content with experts, and checking for the scale reliability. **How will the data be analysed?**Statistical analysis will look for any significant difference between the outcomes of the Control, Standard and Modified groups immediately post-exercise and also at 6 and 12 months.Within group significant difference between pre- and post-exercise outcomes for Standard and Modified groups will indicate the exercise effectiveness in improving participants learning. **Do I have to take part?**Taking part in this study is entirely voluntarily and you will be asked to sign a consent form. Taking part will have no bearing on your employment. If you decide to take part, you will still be free to withdraw your data within two weeks of completing the interview, without giving a reason. If the study harms you in any way, you can contact the Project Team, using the details below for further advice and information.**What are the benefits and risks of taking part in this study?**There is no risk associated with this study. All individual responses will be treated with strict confidence. Only collective data will be discussed. No individual names or organisational names will be disclosed. By taking part in this study you will support DH funded research, which looks at the ways of enhancing outcomes from emergency preparedness exercises. Data collected from this research will provide evidence to contribute to the design of effective emergency preparedness exercises conducted by Public Health England (PHE) Emergency Response Department (ERD).The collected data from this study can also contribute to the **exercise evaluation**, however no individual or organizational names will be shared.**Will the information obtained in the study be confidential?** The data you provide during this study will be kept confidential and anonymous in accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act. At no point will any data be associated with your name or identity.Your data will be retained for 20-years after the study. At no point will you be identified. Your data will be held confidentially, with access restricted to study team working in PHE and King’s College London. Once your data has been analysed, it may be used in publications in academic journals and reports. It may be presented to a variety of academic and professional audiences but you will not be identified.Any potential identifying details (e.g. age, profession) will not be used in the write-up. We will be publishing direct quotes from participants, but none that could identify who said them. We will ask for your permission in advance if we want to use a quote from you that might potentially give someone a clue as to who you are.**What will happen to the results of the study?**Results of this study will be published in peer-reviewed journals and reports and presented at conferences and workshops. We also intend to seek a consultation with participants and the exercise Planning Group to learn from them about the best ways of disseminating the study data. Results will be shared with all participants and the Planning Group.**Who has reviewed this study?**Stage One of this study was reviewed and approved by the PHE Research Ethics and Governance Group (PHE REGG). The Stage Two was reviewed and approved by the King’s College London Ethics Committee.**Who do I need to contact if I want to find more about this research project?**If you would like more information or have any questions or concerns about the study please contactDr Elena Skryabina, one of the project leads at PHE (phone: 01980 6 12930; email: Elena.Skryabina@phe.gov.uk) or Charles Turner, Group Leader Exercises at PHE ERD (phone:01980 6 12956; email: Charles.Turner@phe.gov.uk ). |  |