

Editorial

Journal of Rural and Tropical Public Health launches new Section on Disasters, Emergencies and Crises

Along with a new home page, the Journal of Rural and Tropical Public Health is pleased to announce the addition in August 2006 of a new Section on prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in disasters, emergencies and crises. This was made possible by support from the Anton Breinl Centre for Public Health and Tropical Medicine at James Cook University.

The Anton Breinl Centre is the second most popular Australian public health institution and attracts over 300 Masters students each year from all over the world. It was the first Australian academic institution to offer a formal bioterrorism subject and now offers a Masters of Public Health with a stream in Biosecurity and Disaster Preparedness for students wishing to work in this interesting and growing field.

The Anton Breinl Centre has formed a Disaster Health and Crisis Management Unit, which has been successful in obtaining support, performing relevant research and publishing in the field. The collaborations that have been established by this Unit have enabled the creation of the new journal section entitled "Disaster, Emergency and Crisis Preparedness and Response".

The new Section Editor is Dr Andy Robertson, CSC, MBBS MPH MHSM FAFPHM FRACMA. After his medical training, Andy served in the Royal Australian Navy as a medical officer in various ships and establishments in Australia and overseas. He completed three tours to Iraq with Operation Blazer, including three months as the Chief Inspector of the Biological Weapons Monitoring Group with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) in 1996 and 1997. In October 2003, he retired as Captain from full-time service with Defence to take up a several new roles: Director of the Disaster Preparedness and Management Unit, Chief Health Officer and Divisional Director of the Health Protection Group in WA, and Chair of Defence Health's Disaster and CBR Medicine Consultative Group.

It is hoped that authors will submit articles to this new section that will advance our knowledge in the field of disaster, emergency and crisis management and will highlight the role of public health in this emerging field. We encourage the submission of best-practice and evidence-based approaches to meet the threats posed by increasing numbers of natural and man-made events.

We are sincerely appreciative of the many collaborative relationships that have developed to enable the Disaster Health and Crisis Management Unit to be established and this Journal to flourish. We look forward to further developing these friendships in the pursuit of more effective preparedness and response outcomes.

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