

(69) What Infrastructure Exists for Global Emergency Medical Services Practice and Information Sharing?

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Global forums for sharing current information, practice, policy, and research have been established for many health-care disciplines. The objective of this study is to identify existing forums for global sharing of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) information, practice, and policy.

Websites were searched for international EMS, ambulance, and pre-hospital forums and associations or for EMS sections/subcommittees of related organizations. International EMS-specific publications were searched through general and academic online search engines.

Four international associations were identified for Emergency Medicine which promote EMS in addition to seven national EMS-specific associations with an international section and a number of regional EM organizations with international and/or EMS interest groups. There appeared to be limited, if any, structure bridging these groups globally. EMS publications were identified in a number of languages. One specifically international EMS journal and two international journals with an EMS aspect were identified in English (both also had a “disaster” focus). Other EMS-specific publications were supported by national organizations; these were in English and in a number of other languages including Spanish, Japanese, Czech, French, German, Norwegian, Swedish, and Hebrew. The identification of publications, organizations, and associations was restricted to to electronic searches.

Comprehensive cataloguing of international EMS associations and publications is challenging. A structured forum specifically for sharing global EMS information and practice has yet to be established. In this current geopolitical climate such a global EMS forum would be most valuable to facilitate the sharing ideas, policy, and best practices for EMS stakeholders.

Keywords: emergency medical services; forum; policy; practice; cataloguing

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(70) An Approach to Development of a Global Emergency Medical Services Forum: A New Perspective on International EMS Networking and Information Sharing

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Given the recent increase in the accessibility of global electronic communications technology and infrastructure, establishment of a structured electronic portal for global emergency medical services (EMS) dialogue now is possible. Although internationally, EMS has national and regional forums, and is represented by the global Emergency Medicine infrastructure, there appears to be an unmet need for a unique global EMS forum to share ideas, practice, policy, challenges and achievements—an adjunct to existing infrastructure—across formal, well-established EMS systems to informal, rudimentary EMS systems.

The Global EMS Forum concept was formulated with the shared perspective of a multi-national group of EMS professionals, to enhance global dialogue in prehospital care and practice. This is a multidisciplinary and operational (rather than research-based) forum, focusing on enhancing EMS care through shared global experience, knowledge, and practice. Additionally, given the realities of participation for low-income individuals and nations—a focus on a communication forum optimizing the use of inexpensive global electronic communications technology was selected.

Currently, the Global EMS Forum is designed to be a “virtual” forum for dialogue, through a website and interactive “Webinar” seminars to facilitate accessible global sharing of practice and experience. A goal is to benefit from diverse solutions to core issues and from critical mass information regarding low-frequency, high-cost events. A Development Group has been established, a Website has been launched (www.GlobalEMSForum.org), and initial, cross-cutting themes have been identified that address multi-disciplinary systems issues such as patient, provider, and public safety, vehicle type/design, training, and certification. Currently, the forum is recruiting and expanding global participation.

Keywords: communication; development; emergency medical services (EMS); information-sharing; international; Website

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