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A study on Triage Classification Competence of Emergency Medical Technicians Under Taiwan's Fire Department during Disasters with Mass Casualty

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When a disaster causes mass casualties, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) of the fire department shall rush to the disaster scene in the first instance, and shall effectively implement triage classification for large number of injured victims, so that the majority of injured victims can receive better pre-hospital medical care. The most important job of emergency medical service (EMS) at the disaster scene with mass casualties is to perform emergency triage classification, but the disparity in EMT triage classification often becomes a hot issue that we care about. In this research paper, through literature review and case study at home and abroad, and review of the status of triage classification system at present, I sorted out more important factors that would affect EMT triage classification competence, namely, individual traits of EMT, EMT rescue ability, and decision-making process. Empirical studies and survey questionnaires were taken, and the data obtained were analyzed using regression analysis, path analysis and other statistical methods. In the process, I picked out four major factors, which include "rescue skills," "vital signs," "medical care related license," and "lapse time since last rescue training." These were used in an interpretation model I constructed to help explain and identify the factors that would influence triage classification competence. It is recommended that the fire department shall continue to hold EMT trainings of all levels. These trainings shall incorporate the development of EMT decision-making ability and vital signs assessment skills. At regular intervals, emergency services technical skill appraisals and exercises simulating disaster with mass casualty shall be held, so as to strengthen EMT rescue skills. Their performance could be used for consideration of extension or renewal of their rescue license status. Training expenses and equipment purchase shall be increased. Site commander at the disaster scene is to select the triage personnel of professional rescue units with first priority placed on EMT P. The fire department shall also maintain good coordination with medical units and support groups, and good communication channels in order to receive their opinions and inputs for the implementation of their triage classification system.

Biography

Yi-Chun Lin has completed her PhD at the age of 37 years from National Chiao Tung University. In her academic career, she now serves at the Graduate School of Fire Science & Technology, Central Police University, Taiwan, R.O.C. She is also serving as a State Compensation board member of Fire Bureau New Taipei City Government and Taipei City Fire Department. She is also serving as the Building Technology Committee member of construction and planning Agency, Ministry of the Interior. She is also serving as the Director in Public Policy of the Consumer's Foundation.

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