MCI Training Program: Evaluation & Current Directions

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POSTER PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

Introduction: In 2010, the University of Pennsylvania Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) initiated the Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) training program. An MCI Field Training Exercise allows MERT to rehearse and improve the MCI protocol execution in a half-day-long drill that includes responses with UPennAlert and the Penn MCI trailer, participation from MERT's interagency partners, and approximately 40 simulated patients. Past MCI exercises have simulated active shooter incidents, boiler explosions, bus crashes, chemical spills, and bomb detonations. However, areas for improvement include communication between designated officers, allocation of resources, and hindered extrication. Often, decisions made by the commanding officers do not necessarily reflect the changing environment of an MCI scene. **Program Development & Implementation:** To better prepare student-EMTs to respond and manage a disaster scene, MERT is implementing a tabletop exercise module to ensure that MERT members are fluent in the Incident Command System (ICS), familiar with the MERT MCI operating guidelines, and able to size-up a scene appropriately. Unlike the fast-paced MCI drill, the tabletop exercise is an environment for members to ask clarifying questions, learn the ICS thought process, and make mistakes at their own pace. The tabletop scenario presents a potential MCI scenario to a small group overseen by a facilitator and evaluator. The facilitator presents information to the group and questions members' decision-making. **Program Evaluation:** Concurrently, the evaluator tracks progress using a rubric MERT adapted from FEMA and NIMS standards. This tabletop rubric parallels the rubric used for the MCI drill. Both highlight often-forgotten MERT operating guidelines and parts of the incident command structure (e.g. prioritizing areas of the scene). After the exercise is completed, all of those involved debrief and complete feedback forms. **Discussion/Conclusion:** Our hope is that members will apply what they have learned during the tabletop to an MCI drill and, thus, show improvement in the fluidity of the simulated response.

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