

## **Longitudinal Evaluation of Food Safety Discussion Based Exercises**

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A literature review of evaluation materials reveals that, to date, limited research has been published specifically examining the long-term effects or outcomes of discussion based exercises for emergency and disaster response. Reality based exercises (RBX) are a subset of these discussion based exercises. The RBX simulates real world chaos in a structured format, promotes discussion among the key stakeholders regarding a hypothetical incident and stresses the management and creation of policies and procedures for such an incident. Michigan State University has partnered with Wayne State University to evaluate the longitudinal outcomes of coordination and collaboration of four RBXs. It is also a goal of this project to better understand the lessons learned process. These RBXs took place at different times and in different locations for somewhat different groups. By evaluating participants from these exercises at various points in time after their participation, the impact of the exercise on the individual participant as well as their organization can be evaluated.

This project has three phases. First telephone interviews were conducted on a small sub-sample of the participants from the exercises. These participants were randomly selected. The interviews are near completion and will be reported in summary form. The second phase of the project is an online survey. This survey seeks to determine the outcomes of the exercise based on five major factors. These factors were borne out of previous research. These are management strategies, coordination strategies, organizational acceptance, exercise design features and response criteria (or measurement). The online survey will be administered to randomly selected participants from these exercises. A control group will also be measured.

Currently there are few prior publications related to this effort. The overall goal of this project is to determine the long-term effectiveness of discussion based Exercises. Because the literature on these exercises is lacking this project hopes to add to the literature and promote further studies on this important topic. The lessons learned process is not well understood and this type of project seeks to further the knowledge and literature regarding the lessons learned process. Based upon the disaster and emergency response literature, it seeks to understand and improve discussion-based exercises. This project also seeks to better understand the impact of these exercises on individuals and organizations.