

- resource alerting process;
- 3) The principle of cooperation, also within health service emergency units, requires clear procedures for international alerting, accepted and understood by the participants; and
  - 4) There might be a need for procedures to appoint a Hospital Emergency Dispatch Centre "In-Charge" as a regional concept.

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**Keywords :** alert; cooperation; co-ordination; command; dispatch centre; emergency; Norway; health services; integration; rescue, chain of; search and rescue; ship, sinking of

### **Train Collision At Rena (Åsta), Norway, 04 January, 2000: Debriefing Programme for Paramedics**

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**Introduction:** On a cold January afternoon, in flatland, eastern Norway, two trains unknowingly moved toward each other on the same track. They inevitably and tragically collided at 12:30 hours near Rena, Norway. Nineteen people, — train personnel and passengers of all ages, — die.

In an effort to cope with tragedies and disasters of all kinds, issues of social science are among the most crucial on which to focus. Caretaking of rescue personnel, mainly paramedics, in the aftermath of this traumatic accident is examined.

**Objective:** Psychological debriefing of rescuers after traumatic experiences recently has received more attention than in previous years. In Norway, lay people can be trained in the art of debriefing, and more than 3,000 persons of various formal backgrounds have completed these courses. The essential idea behind these courses is to gain the possible benefit of colleagues treating colleagues in an atmosphere of mutual understanding of the reactions to traumatic events shared among rescue workers from all areas.

**Methods:** The Paramedic Service of Oslo (Ullevål Hospital) was invited to participate in a program of psychological debriefing after the Rena train collision. Over eight days, nine paramedics from Oslo who had been trained in debriefing, guided 34 of the Rena rescue personnel through a program of 59 psychological debriefings.

**Results and Conclusions:** All of the rescuers volunteered to participate in a research program conducted by the Office of Disaster Psychiatry at the University of Oslo and completed a questionnaire for that research. Mapping of paramedics reactions after traumatic experiences had not yet been done in Norway. The feedback in Oslo after the program ended has been overwhelmingly positive.

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