

About the HPA

The Health Protection Agency, is an independent organisation that was set up by the government in 2003 to protect the public from the health effects of infectious diseases and other hazards to health.

It does this by providing support, advice and information to the general public, to health professionals, to national and local government and to other organisations that play a part in protecting health.

The HPA identifies and responds to health hazards and emergencies caused by infectious disease, hazardous chemicals, poisons or radiation.

It also makes sure the nation is ready for future threats to health that could happen naturally, accidentally or deliberately.

The HPA combines public health and scientific knowledge, research and emergency planning within one organisation – and works at international, national, regional and local levels.

The HPA work is underpinned by research and gathering the best possible evidence. It has a history of translating this intelligence into actions that directly help patients, such as new vaccines and treatments.

Please visit www.hpa.org.uk to learn more about the HPA and its work.

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Behavioural Science Research

Emergency Response



Behavioural Science Research Team

The Behavioural Science Research Team (BSRT) conducts research projects in the areas of psychological and behavioural responses to conventional terrorism, natural disasters and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents, communicating risk to the public, psychosocial emergency preparedness and response, and operational research concerning mass casualty decontamination.



Working in partnership

Research projects are funded by the Department of Health, the Home Office and the European Commission, and involve a range of collaborators including: the Institute of Psychiatry and King's Centre for Risk Management at King's College London, the Centre de Recherches du Service de Santé des Armées (CRSSA), France, the Faculty of Military Health Sciences University of Defence, Czech Republic, CBRN Defence and Security Division, Swedish Defence Research Agency and the University of Stuttgart in Germany.



Strategic input

The BSRT uses both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to investigate the psychological, social and communication-related factors that predict behavioural responses to emergencies and incidents. This work is used in the development of risk communication strategies and novel interventions aimed at promoting positive behavioural responses in the general public, particularly when faced with the possibility of CBRN emergencies.

The team also works alongside the HPA's Microbial Risk Assessment group to use survey data to quantify the behavioural responses of the public that are most likely to impact upon public health outcomes and disease control during infectious disease outbreaks.

