

Risk Communication– June 2011

Title: Risk Communication

Level: Master and PhD Students

Dates: 16.-17.6.2011

ECTS: 2 ECTS (participation with poster presentation), 1 ECTS (participation only)

Coordinators: Kirsi Latola (Kirsi.latola@oulu.fi) Thule Institute and Arja Rautio, Centre for Arctic Medicine (arja.rautio@oulu.fi)

Course instructors: Cindy Jardine (Univ Alberta) and Kirsi Vähäkangas (Univ Eastern Finland)

Course outline: This 1½ day full time course will give an introduction to variety of issues related to risk communication. Risk communication is a complex, multidisciplinary, multidimensional, and evolving process of increasing importance in protecting the public's health. Public health officials use risk communication as a tool to give citizens necessary and appropriate information and to involve them in making decisions that affect their health.

Risk communication is associated with environmental health decision making in issues such as air pollution, hazardous waste sites, lead, pesticides, drinking water, and asbestos. Risk communication is also used to help promote changes in individual behavior such as helping people to make informed decisions about continuing to enjoy traditional foods while moderating their intake because of the presence of contaminants.

The National Research Council (NRC) defines risk communication as "an interactive process of exchange of information and opinion among individuals, groups, and institutions that raises the level of understanding of relevant issues or actions for those involved and satisfies them that they are adequately informed within the limits of available knowledge. The definition includes "discussion about risk types and levels and about methods for managing risks". Specifically, this process is defined by levels of involvement in decisions, actions, or policies aimed at managing or controlling health or environmental risks.

Learning outcomes: The course gives the participants an overview on different aspects related to risk communication: concepts, definitions and ethics of risk communication, history, background and future challenges of risk communication, health communication models, process of risk communication, risk information, case study examples, risk assessment and management in relation to risk communication, assessment of risk communication success, risk management and community decision making, conflict resolution by risk communication, e.g. between citizens and corporate, benefits and barriers of risk communication, conflicting risks and messages, difficulty of translating scientific information.

Teaching methods: Lectures, plenum discussions and practices

Course literature:

Fischhoff, B. 1995. Risk perception and communication unplugged: Twenty years of process. *Risk Analysis* 15(2): 137-145.

Gurabardhi, Z., Gutteling, J.M. and Kuttschreuter, M. 2005. An empirical analysis of communication flow, strategy and stakeholders' participation in the risk communication literature 1988-2000. *Journal of Risk Research* 8(6), 499-511.

McComas, K. 2006. Defining moments in risk communication research: 1996-2005. *Journal of Health Communication* 11: 75-91.

Morgan, M.G., Fischhoff, B., Bostrom, A., Lave, L. and Atman, C.J. 1992. Communicating risk to the public: First, learn what people know and believe. *Environmental Science & Technology* 26(11): 2048-2056.

Boholm, A. 1998. Comparative studies of risk perception: A review of twenty years of research. *Journal of Risk Research* 1(2): 135-163.

Slovic, P. 1987. Perception of risk. *Science* 236: 280-284.

Kasperson, R.E., Renn, O., Slovic, P., Brown, H.S., Emel, J., Goble, R., Kasperson, J.X. and Ratick, S. 1988. The social amplification of risk: A conceptual framework. *Risk Analysis* 8(2): 177-187.

Slovic, P., Finucane, M., Peters, E., and MacGregor, D.G. 2004. Risk as analysis and risk as feelings: Some thoughts about affect, reason, risk and rationality. *Risk Analysis* 24(2): 311-322.

Fitzpatrick-Lewis, D., Yost, J., Ciliska, D., Krishnaratne, S. 2010. Communication about environmental health risks: A systematic review. *Environmental Health* 9:67-82.

Vähäkangas, K. H. 2004. Ethical aspects of molecular epidemiology of cancer. *Carcinogenesis* 25: 465-471.

Merlo, D.F., Knudsen, L.E., Matusiewicz, K., Niebrój, L., Vähäkangas, K.H. Ethics in studies on children and environmental health. 2007. *J. Med. Ethics* 33: 408 – 413.

Course Programme

June 16th	Risk Communication - Day 1	
9.00-10.30	Introduction to Risk Communication	Professor Cindy Jardine
10.30-11.00	Coffee Break	
11.00-11.45	Introduction to Risk Communication, cont.	Professor Cindy Jardine
11.45-12.30	Ethical questions related to communication of research results	Professor Kirsi Vähäkangas
12.30-13.30	Lunch	
13.30-14.15	Risk communication and environmental health; what to tell, how and when?	Docent Matti Viluksela
14.15-15.30	Poster presentations Coffee break	Course participants
15.30-17.00	Communicating risk: public and expert understanding of risks in mining projects Risk communication in the context of large scale energy projects in the circumpolar North Discussion	Hannu Heikkinen, Senior scientist Hannah Strauss, PhD student
18.30-	Social programme	
June 17th	Risk Communication- Day 2	
9.00-9.45	Crisis communication	Professor Erkki Karvonen
9.45-10.30	Information or imagination	Markku Heikkilä
10.30-11.00	Coffee Break	
11.00-12.30	Workshop and Conclusions	Course instructors and participants
12.30-13.30	Farewell Lunch	