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Importance Of Protecting Reliable Knowledge In Emergency Management

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FROM THE EDITOR
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About a month ago, Merriam-Webster's editors chose "slop" as the word of the year. Defined as "digital content of low quality that is produced usually in quantity by means of artificial intelligence," (2025) slop represents an inevitable outcome of the way that so-called 'artificial intelligence' makes it easy to produce raw volumes of content with little validation and verification, little context and respect for lived experience, and little accountability for the harms it does.

By contrast, the mission of an academic journal like CJEM – the Canadian Journal of Emergency Management – is exactly the opposite of 'artificial intelligence' and slop. As a journal, it is our *raison d'être* to help the emergency management community share, protect, and preserve knowledge that can be counted on. The defining features of a journal – like peer review, clear authorship, procedures for retractions and corrections, supplementary materials to document underlying instruments and data – are, at their heart, an effort to ensure that the publications under our 'masthead' are earnest attempts to produce as reliable, as high quality, and as dependable a corpus of knowledge as possible. They're a commitment to knowledge production, epistemic relations, and the earned trust of peers that is the opposite of AI slop.

This doesn't mean, of course, that the best available knowledge is perfect, or that knowledge doesn't evolve and change as we learn more. Indeed, it is our hope as a journal that others will build upon, innovate, advance, and correct the work featured in CJEM issues. But, what makes journals writ large, and CJEM in particular, so special is our commitment to being the antithesis of slop: CJEM is a place where you can trust that authors are engaged in a good-faith effort to further our collective understanding about the world of emergency management, and who warrant full authorship

and take full accountability for the work they do and the peer reviews they offer as colleagues in this field.

The articles in this issue exemplify these values. The first article published under the new model, “Learning from COVID equity measures to increase community resilience” by Mongeon et al. (2024) documents lessons learned from a rural public health unit, capturing both challenges and ideas worth replicating by other practitioners. Similarly, Rowsell et al. (2025) provide a case study of Ottawa Public Health’s approach to implementing an ‘Equity Officer’ as part of their emergency responses. Robert et al.’s investigation into creating facilitative tools for visualizing and discussing municipal electrical infrastructure (2025) paints the portrait of boundary objects that facilitate cross-sectoral and multi-sectoral deliberation. Together, these three articles embody CJEM’s mission to bridge the divide between research and practice, documenting lessons learned from case studies that will have value to the entire emergency management community, in Canada and abroad.

The issue also includes three other articles that, similarly, provide both academic and practical inspiration through large scale reviews. Kikkert & Lackenbauer’s synthesis of civil-military domestic disaster response in Canada’s North (2025) offers a comprehensive review of how arctic emergency response in Canada is structured and implemented – a complex topic distilled into a very useful article for practitioners and researchers alike. Acenas et al. (2025) introduce a tool called “General Morphological Analysis,” characterizing the ways that it has been used in public health emergencies and offering suggestions for future implementation. And, Greaves et al. (2025) provide a review of dimensions of sex, gender, and equity relevant to emergency management that provides a new tool – the Gendered Emergency Management Framework – that can help to incorporate these factors into emergency management practice. We are grateful to all of these

authors (some twenty-one authors in total!) and the dozens of peer reviewers and editorial staff who have contributed so much.

Long-time readers of the Canadian Journal of Emergency Management will have noticed that we have had something of a hiatus from publishing issues recently. In 2024 and 2025, the organization undertook a significant reworking of our publishing processes to better serve the community. The journal migrated to the Open Journal System thanks to its new partnership with York University, which provides a stronger back-end system for managing submissions, better indexation of the journal in key search engines and ranking systems, and a cleaner experience for readers. We also transformed from fixed dates for publishing articles to a system where individual articles are now published immediately upon completion of peer review as ‘Online First’ articles, before being bundled into the next available issue. This means that your work will be available to the community more quickly, to be used, to be cited, and to inspire the next project.

This transition was only possible because of an impressive and inspiring number of volunteers. Some, like Simon Wells, Alexander Fremis, and Rosemary Thuss sat in key editorial roles and provided the foundation for making these changes. Others, like Mesha Richard and Shannan Saunders, filled critical gaps during this transition to keep our editorial operations moving. Our editorial staff volunteers, operations volunteers, Editorial Board, and Board of Directors – too numerous to name here – played an essential role in providing vision and continuity of operations. And, others still, like Tiffany Leung (Executive Director) and Sarah Cowan (our new Managing Editor) have both played and are playing an absolutely critical role in shaping this next chapter of the journal. I, personally, and the journal and field alike are grateful for each and every volunteer’s contributions to this issue and to the overall transformation.

In the months ahead, the speed of trans-

formation will only continue to accelerate. While all journals face serious headwinds in soliciting reviews, we will keep working to speed turnaround times as much as possible – and ask you, the reader, to be willing to contribute to building this collective resource by serving as a peer reviewer for future articles. The Journal also has several new and exciting article types, including “Case Reports,” which are meant to function as abridged after action reviews for practitioners to share lessons learned from responses, exercises, initiatives, or any other experience with the national and international community. We are also looking to increase the number of databases in which CJEM is indexed and to increase the frequency of both article and issue publication.

The Canadian Journal of Emergency Management is a special venue for knowledge production. Being a fully open access venue with no fees to read or to publish; providing free translation of all articles into both official languages; bridging the gap between research and practice; being a supportive venue for first-time authors and for constructive peer reviews; and, continuing to be the antithesis of slop – these are commitments that make CJEM worth investing in. We are grateful for your trust and contributions thus far, and hope you will continue to invest in building this special venue for knowledge production together.

Sincerely,

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