TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND FOOD SAFETY GOVERNANCE

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Outline

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Background

- The 2008 Canada-wide listeriosis outbreak
  - Contaminated ready-to-eat meats
  - Source: Maple Leaf Foods Toronto-area plant
  - 57 illnesses, 23 confirmed deaths
  - Median age of the deceased was 76 years

- Food safety governance in Canada is a shared endeavour

Consumers

Farmers

All levels of government

Food processing industry

Health Canada
  - Establishes policies, legislation and standards

Canadian Food Inspection Agency
  - Enforces regulatory compliance

Public Health Agency of Canada
  - Promotes and protects public health
• The outbreak was a catalyst for change
• At the federal level
  • Internal reviews by HC, CFIA, and the PHAC
  • An independent investigator, Sheila Weatherill, conducted a further review

• Among the Weatherill (2009) report recommendations
  • More effective communication on how to minimize the risk of becoming sick
  • Improved public involvement opportunities
Since the outbreak, risk communication has been improved, e.g.
- HC's research into public perceptions of risk
- As has public involvement, e.g.
  - CFIA's new agency-wide consultation framework

But communication remains far from ideal, e.g.
- Overly general, rather than focused on vulnerable populations
- And involvement is not highly participatory, e.g.
  - Far more engagement with experts than with the lay public (Mikulsen and Diduck 2013)
Objective

- Enhance the conceptual footing of risk communication and public involvement in food safety governance

Methods

- Creative inquiry (Montuori 2005) in an integrative literature review (Torraco 2005) in order to synthesize selected constructs in an attempt to generate new knowledge
Concepts & theory

- Co-evolutionary governance (Jasonoff 1990, Millstone 2007)
- Dialogical communication (Leiss 1996, Renn 2009)
- Deliberative participation (e.g. Rowe and Frewer 2000)

A co-evolutionary model of food safety governance (Ely et al. 2009, Koenig et al. 2010, Walls et al. 2011)
The disaster management cycle, comprised of four principal phases (Alexander 2002, Cutter 2006, Milet 1999)

- Increased attention to human-made environmental / biological risks (Beck 1992)
- Similarities between the health and disaster determinants of vulnerability (Lindsay 2003)
- The disaster management cycle maps easily on to food safety analysis (Khan et al. 2008)
Results & discussion

- Any given food safety hazard can become, under quickly evolving circumstances, a food safety disaster
- But even co-evolutionary models of governance may not capture the full implications of this
- We, therefore, suggest a model that integrates disaster management and food safety governance

An integrated, co-evolutionary model of disaster management and food safety governance
• But – a caveat
  • The extent of dialogue and deliberation must be calibrated for the governance context
  • High degrees of dialogue and deliberation are less suited to assessment and response than to the other phases

Conclusions

• We hope the integrated model spurs further interest in the often overlapping arenas of food safety and disaster management
• Further research is needed to study the conditions under which the model can benefit decision making and improve public safety, e.g.
• A post hoc assessment of an outbreak involving all or a majority of the model’s phases
• A Delphi study to identify effective dialogical and deliberative processes at each of the phases
• Community-based research on dialogue and deliberation in framing, evaluation, management and mitigation

References


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