

CLINICAL "SNIPPETS"

"Will emergency health care providers respond to mass casualty incidents?"

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Prehospital Emergency Care . 11(1):49-54, 2007.

Overview: This study used random surveys of the staff of a major medical center in New York State and was designed to ascertain the willingness of the staff to report for duty in the event of a major biological terrorist event. Two scenarios were proposed. In the first the agent was determined to be non-transmissible and had an effective treatment and/or prophylaxis. In the second the agent was determined to be transmissible with only an experimental treatment.

Conclusions: In the first scenario almost 80% of the survey takers would respond to work. In the second scenario only 18% stated that they would report for duty. The most significant factor that seemed to influence their decision was the availability of treatment for their family members. This resulted in a doubling of response to work in both scenarios.