

## **The Health Protection Research Unit in Emergency Preparedness and Response**

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<https://epr.hpru.nihr.ac.uk/HPRU3>

Our Unit is led by a team from King's College London and includes researchers from the University of East Anglia and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). It has three research themes. We have worked with UKHSA to choose projects for these themes that will help UKHSA to protect people's health in emergencies. Our themes, and the main questions they will answer, are described below.

### **Emergency Preparedness:**

1. When emergencies happen, how should UKHSA explain what people need to do? What are the best ways to communicate about this with people from minority groups or who have health conditions?
2. Can we develop ways to help UKHSA understand the problems that people face during a future emergency?
3. How can the mental health of staff who respond to an emergency be supported, particularly when they face attacks in the press, on social media or in person?
4. How can UKHSA train people from different agencies to work together during an emergency?

### **Data and Information:**

1. How can UKHSA make use of all the data it has access to during an emergency? Could they use artificial intelligence tools, to summarise data quickly and spot any patterns?
2. How should information be presented to decision makers, to help them make decisions quickly?
3. Could UKHSA use artificial intelligence to speed up the way they summarise papers from the scientific literature, helping them give a fair summary of all the evidence to decision makers?
4. Are there ways to tell whether the actions UKHSA take are likely to work during an emergency, particularly when there have not been many scientific studies about it?

### **Pandemic Preparedness**

1. What messages help people understand that, during a pandemic, you might need to take action about symptoms even if they are mild, for example by self-isolating?
2. What are the best ways for UKHSA to find out how many people are following their advice during a pandemic?
3. How can UKHSA help people who work with farm animals take actions to stop flu from passing from animals to humans?
4. Does screening travellers at airports help to stop people from bringing infections into the UK?
5. Can we summarise the positive and negative effects of the measures UKHSA might recommend in a pandemic, to help policymakers make difficult decisions?

Someone from UKHSA will check every project, to make sure the results will be useful for them. We will involve members of the public in every project, taking advice as the work goes on about what questions to ask, how to do each study, and how to make sure the results are explained clearly. Most projects will look at why people from certain communities or groups tend to be more affected by emergencies than others and how UKHSA can change this. Finally, we will provide training and support to everyone involved in our work, to help them do more, good-quality research in the future.