

# Expecting the Worst

## A Publication from the Uppsala Monitoring Centre

2nd revised edition. Bruce Hugman (UMC Communications Consultant), with a chapter on Vaccine Crises by Jerry Labadie. Copyright Uppsala Monitoring Centre August 2010. Printed and bound (soft cover) in Stockholm, Sweden. 191 pages. ISBN 978-91974750-8-2

A review by David Clark, East Taieri, New Zealand

When this reviewer was asked to review a book called "*Expecting the Worst*" from the WHO Collaborating Centre for International Monitoring of Adverse Drug Reactions, Uppsala, Sweden, i.e. the Uppsala Monitoring Centre (UMC), he assumed that it would be about the methods used by the centre in identifying newly recognized possible adverse reactions to drugs, and would cover such topics as use of the Information Component (IC) in signal detection. This is not the purpose of this book: its purpose is to describe how health-related crises may be anticipated, prevented and managed in health settings generally. It is written in a lively and engaging manner, with an important and most useful feature of the book being the rich peppering of the text with examples drawn from practice.

This is the second edition of this UMC publication and, compared with the first, which was published in 2003, it has been fully revised and updated by its author, Bruce Hugman, Communications Consultant to the UMC. The new edition also includes an additional chapter covering crisis management following vaccine use. This was written in collaboration with Dr Jerry Labadie, the UMC's specialist in vaccine safety.

The chapter titles (italicized below) summarize the book's contents:

### 1. *Introduction*

This vividly illustrates the principles of crisis management by reference to well known exam-

ples of medicinal crises, including the Pan Pharmaceuticals recall of 1500 products in Australia, the withdrawal of rofecoxib (Vioxx®) and valdecoxib (Bextra®), H5N1 (avian flu), H1N1 (swine flu), oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) supply, contaminated products and many more examples. As an example of well recognized measures that have been put in place to avert and minimize a crisis, the introduction refers to the ritual of demonstrating emergency routines at the start of an aircraft flight. It also addresses the question of who survives emergencies and crises.

It is pointed out that the term 'risk', as used in the book, has the more general meaning of the probability of any event that has negative consequences, rather than the meaning associated with the 'drug safety' concept of benefit, harm and effectiveness.

### 2. *Action: the framework for planning – a quick overview*

This brief chapter provides a simple guide to the planning process, each step of which is covered in more detail in a later chapter (chapter 5).

### 3. *What is crisis management?*

A crisis is defined in the context of an unplanned event, or succession of events, which lead to interruption or destabilization of the normal operations or activities of an organization. The severity and nature of crises are discussed along with how they might arise. The main elements and objectives of crisis management are explained with examples.

### 4. *A general model and rationale for crisis management*

A model is provided with reasons for including each of the elements discussed in detail. Comments on implementation with examples are also included.

### 5. *Planning for crisis management*

This chapter provides guidance and advice for effective crisis management and for reviewing existing arrangements for managing crises. It also discusses preparedness for crises and makes recommendations for improving preparation and prediction of risk.

### 6. *Risk assessment and risk management*

Guidance and advice is provided in this chapter for enabling assessment of general risks of, and vulnerability for, a crisis along with discussion of processes to manage these.

### 7. *Crisis communications*

Guidance and advice to enable planning and implementation of effective crisis communication skills and practice are provided. It is emphasized that this is 'not a game for amateurs' and is a 'huge topic'. A summary of the principles of communication practice is included.

### 8. *Vaccines and crisis management*

This chapter, written in collaboration with Dr Jerry Labadi, summarizes differences in management of crises in the special case of vaccines compared with those from other types of crises in healthcare.

### 9. *A typical crisis: the first day*

The response to and management of crises at different levels of the healthcare organization is summarized in a large chart, with timelines for each level of the organization.

Several appendices are included. These provide examples of case studies, sample guidelines and sources of crisis. These are considered from the perspectives of stakeholders, media relations, social networking, effective communication and audience psychology. A comprehensive list of references is included.

Overall, this is an extremely well researched and impressive book that provides invaluable information on the prevention and management of crises in healthcare. Throughout, real examples bring the text to life by showing how important crises in healthcare have been managed in the past. This book, in providing practical advice and outlining procedures for anticipating and handling crises, will make an invaluable addition to the library of pharmaceutical companies, pharmacovigilance centres, national poisons centres and other healthcare organizations.

"*Expecting the Worst*" costs SEK570, \$US75, £50 or €60.

Further information on this book may be obtained from [sten.olsson@who-umc.org](mailto:sten.olsson@who-umc.org)

Copies may be ordered online from [www.umc-products.com](http://www.umc-products.com)

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