EMERGENT LEADERSHIP DURING A NATURAL DISASTER: A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF AN ACUTE HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATION’S LEADERSHIP

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE
- Lack of empirical research on crisis leadership
- Emergent leadership during a crisis
- Differentiates crisis leadership from crisis management
  - Types of crisis
  - Crisis planning and processes

LITERATURE GAP
- Paucity of literature on crisis leadership during a natural disaster
- Paucity of literature on the emergence or development of crisis leaders

RESEARCH PROBLEM
- Unprecedented crisis
- Natural disaster lasting several days
- Collapse of formal leadership structure and roles
- Emergence of crisis leaders

RESEARCH PURPOSE
"...is to explore the multiplicative factors (personal and professional) that facilitated the emergence of leaders during a natural disaster which resulted in a crisis situation in an acute health care facility and explore the organizational systems context that promoted the emergence of leaders during a natural disaster crisis situation in an acute health care facility"

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
- The primary research question
  - How do leaders emerge during a natural disaster crisis situation in an acute health care facility environment?
- Other guiding Questions
  - What are the personal and professional characteristics and attributes of health care professionals who emerged as leaders?
  - How did health care professionals emerge as a crisis leaders?
  - What leadership behaviors and skills were evident in leaders who emerged?
  - How did organizational systems support the emergence of crisis leaders?
  - How is a crisis leader described, characterized, and identified?
  - What crucible promoted the emergence of crisis leadership?
  - What leadership behaviors emerged that exhibited characteristics of crisis leadership?
• Qualitative Study with Narrative Analysis

• Setting
  – Southeast Louisiana hospital in the Metropolitan area
  – Hospital currently closed post-Katrina

• Purposive Sampling
  – Utilization of a gatekeeper
  – Formal and informal leaders

• Inclusion Criteria
  – employed at the acute health care organizations located in Southeast Louisiana at the time of the natural disaster;
  – on duty (working) at the time of, during, in the immediate aftermath of the natural disaster (until all patients were evacuated); and
  – remained employed at the acute health care organization during the recovery period until the acute health care facility closed.

• Instrument
  – Researcher developed interview guide
  – Open-ended questioning with probes
  – Encouraged to tell their story

• Data Collection
  – Potential participants will be send a participation invitation via email and/or phone call
  – Interview will occur in a private office and mutually agreed upon location

• Data Collection (cont.)
  – Audiotape each interview
  – Participant debriefed after the interview
  – Field notes recorded after the interview process
  – Each interview will be transcribed verbatim

• Notes recorded within 30 minutes of interview
• Analyzed field notes thematically

• read each transcript for validation of transcription accuracy;
• read each transcript a second time for general understanding;
• read each transcript a third time with the first coding (free nodes generated using NVivo 8)
• read and coded each transcript a second time at least a week from the first reading to identify any other themes not identified in the first coding and verifying the first themes generated from coding;
• read and collapsed the free notes into thematic categories;
• reviewed literature to assist with development of thematic categories into an emerging leadership framework;
**FINDINGS**

**GENERAL FINDINGS**
- 14 participants
  - 11 female
  - 27 to 55 with average of age 47.8
  - 50% had line authority and 50% did not have line authority
- Interviews lasted 34 to 58 minutes with an average of 45 minutes

**FIELD NOTES FINDINGS**
- Physically crossed their arms over their body or crossed their legs when the interview discussion focused on their feelings and period at which the environment became unstable and communication systems failed
- To disengage when speaking about the deaths that occurred
- Physically pushed back their chair from the conference table when speaking about their emotions during the crisis - the participants became animated using their hands and other body movement to describe different rescue situations that were occurring

**FIELD NOTES THEMES**
- Crisis leader emergence
  - Past experience,
  - Prior knowledge regarding management and leadership,
  - Out of necessity,
  - Autonomous assumption of leadership based on the need to survive,
  - Collapse of infrastructure required innovation and creativity
- Personal characteristics of crisis leaders
  - Visible,
  - Decisive,
  - Trustworthy,
  - Respected,
  - Willing to engage in frontline work

**FIELD NOTES THEMES**
- Leadership behaviors and skills
  - Clinical competence,
  - Organizational,
  - Interpersonal communication,
  - Decision making

**INTERVIEW THEMATIC CATEGORIES**
- Crisis management plan
- Infrastructure collapse
- Emergent crisis leader
- Crisis leader characteristics
  - Trusted and respected
  - Decisive
  - Calm
  - Visible and accessible
  - Mission focused and visionary
  - Autonomous
  - Selfless commitment
  - Confidence
  - Positive attitude
  - Multitask
  - Physical strength and stamina
  - Knowledgeable and experienced
INTERVIEW THEMATIC CATEGORIES

- Crisis management
  - Organizing
  - Planning
  - Controlling
  - Reporting and documenting
  - Meeting basic needs
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Post-crisis support and debriefing

LIMITATIONS

- One gatekeeper
- White
- Self-report bias
- Acute care facility
- Natural disaster
- Pending community litigation
- One point in time
- Researcher bias

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Next steps
  - Instrument development
    - Institutional
    - Individual

QUESTIONS