

## Welcome Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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When I was eight or nine years old, my dad gave me a copy of the book *Anguished English*, by Richard Lederer. The book was a compilation of puns, jokes, and double meanings, mostly accidental, that Lederer spotted in the world around him. Often these came from headlines, news articles, or ads. A lot of the jokes depended on one word that could mean two different things—or different words with meanings that were similar, but not quite the same. The book was incredibly funny to me as a child, but the confusion caused by the double meanings was real, and in the real world, often not quite as funny.

The articles in this issue point to a similar problem of definition and double meaning in emergency dispatch. As a young field, we are still working out exactly what we mean by our common words and phrases, and the ambiguity can sometimes lead to disagreements or confusion in our work. It also, though, can point to important but subtle differences that can color the way we think about what we do.

For example, two of the articles in this issue refer to traffic accidents—or, if you prefer, collisions, crashes, incidents, or wrecks. And therein lies the problem. If we talk about traffic incidents (the most neutral term) as accidents, we remove all concept of responsibility or blame and, as a result, the potential for prevention and intervention. Yet defining all traffic incidents as crashes or wrecks leads to the problem of overtriage that many agencies note when discussing these kinds of events; a lot of traffic incidents are fender-benders, and many involve no injuries and little damage. On top of that is the complication caused by the many modes of transportation available to us. Is an electric scooter running into a pedestrian really a “traffic” incident? If not, what is it? How should we respond?

The same question arises on the emotional side of the emergency dispatcher’s work. As the authors of the paper in this issue on emotional labor point out, there are many underlying concerns that often get bundled together as “stress” or “PTSD,” including emotional exhaustion, burnout, compassion fatigue, and others. Teasing apart these concepts allows us to better understand what emergency dispatchers are really going through—and to create more targeted interventions and treatments. But as these authors demonstrate, the work of identifying each component of the emergency dispatcher’s labor is just beginning.

Even an apparently straightforward concept like stroke—the focus of the other paper in this issue—is potentially complex in the world of emergency services. If different kinds of strokes respond to different types or levels of treatment, it is incumbent upon us to identify them as early in the process as we can, and to ensure that patients are moved as quickly as possible to the best, most appropriate care. But how detailed can we get and still ensure we are gathering actionable, useful information?

I don’t know the answers to these questions; that’s what research is for. That’s why I am so pleased that *AEDR* is the site for many of these questions being worked out, studied, and discussed. We may be a young field, but as we tackle these issues, we are already setting up the innovations for the next generation of emergency dispatching and beyond.



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