Reviewer’s report

Title: Effective Media Communication of Disasters: Pressing Problems and Recommendations

Version: 2 Date: 5 May 2007

Reviewer: Ivan Oransky

Reviewer’s report:

General

Thank you for the opportunity to review the revised version of this manuscript. As the authors lay out in their letter, they have responded appropriately to all of my concerns and suggestions, and I would now recommend publication of the manuscript.

I would like to reiterate my suggestion that the experience of Hurricane Katrina be used as a case for further study. The problems of the journalist-PIO relationship were brought into high relief by that disaster.

Also, based on the makeup of the committee of experts that was convened by the authors, I would suggest having far more journalists on any future panel. As I mentioned in my initial review, it was difficult to evaluate the strength of these recommendations without knowing who served on the panel. Among the 23 experts listed, there are just two that are working journalists, and only one of those two is likely to have been out in the field reporting during the disaster in question, according to their job descriptions. Perhaps the three members of the committee who did not follow up on drafts of the report were working reporters, but I would strongly urge the inclusion of more working journalists on the next panel. It’s hard to see how useful recommendations from such a panel would be without their inclusion.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept without revision

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests