

Anke Richter reflects on the impact of public health research published in *Homeland Security Affairs* over the years.

By Anke Richter

Until 2020, public health had an uneasy relationship with the majority of the homeland security establishment. Unlike first responders and the medical establishment (hospitals, doctors, nurses, and ambulances) which focus on securing and saving individuals, public health focuses on the population as a whole. This societal perspective is different, difficult, and requires an alternate mind-set from traditional incident response.

The threat has been known. In January 2000, the CIA issued report NIE 99-17D that stated that “new and reemerging infectious diseases will pose a rising global health threat [...] over the next twenty years. These diseases will endanger United States citizens at home and abroad, [...], and exacerbate social and political instability [...]”¹ But while pandemic planning was required in the early 2000s, a severe pandemic hadn’t happened in several decades and there were many other incidents that threatened homeland security that were more recent and tangible. It was hard for public health priorities to garner attention.

Now, for the past year and a half, every journal, including *Homeland Security Affairs*, has been publishing on all aspects the Covid-19 pandemic and our preventions and response (or the lack thereof). However, *Homeland Security Affairs* has included public health and public health preparedness in its articles since the journal’s inception. The first such article appeared on October 2006 in Volume 2, Issue 3. Denise Santiago, a public health official, and her advisor, published an article that provided a means to determining the manpower requirements of public health departments to respond to public health emergencies.² And approximately every year thereafter, an article on public health and public health preparedness appeared.³ This collection of works sounded the early alarm on our abilities and inabilities to respond to a global pandemic.

About the Author

Anke Richter is a professor at the Defense Resources Management Institute of the Naval Postgraduate School. She received a BA in Mathematics and French from Dartmouth College (1991) and a Ph.D. in Operations Research from Stanford University (1996). Her graduate work was supported by a grant from the Office of Naval Research. Dr. Richter was previously a Director of Health Outcomes at RTI-Health Solutions, RTI International. Her research interests include resource allocation for epidemic control, disease modelling and economic impact assessment, and bio terrorism. She has published in many peer-reviewed journals, including the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, *PharmacoEconomics*, *Medical Decision Making*, *Disaster Medicine*, and *Journal of Emergency Management*. Dr. Richter is a member of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS). While English is Dr. Richter's first language, she is also fluent in German and French. She may be reached at arichter@nps.edu.

Notes

1. Central Intelligence Agency, *National Infectious Disease Threat Report*, NIE 99-17D (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, January 2000), 5.
2. Denise Santiago and Anke Richter, "Assessment of Public Health Infrastructure to Determine Public Health Preparedness," *Homeland Security Affairs* 2, Article 11 (October 2006), <https://www.hsaj.org/articles/686>.
3. John Delaney, "The National Disaster Medical System's Reliance on Civilian-Based Medical Response Teams in a Pandemic is Unsound," *Homeland Security Affairs* 3, Article 1 (June 2007), <https://www.hsaj.org/articles/146>.

Meredith Allen, "Brick by Brick: The Strategic Re-Building of the Public Health Infrastructure," *Homeland Security Affairs Supplement: CHDS Essay Contest (First Annual – 2008)*. Posted on August 2008.

Christine Bradshaw and Thomas Bartenfeld, "Exercise Evaluation Guides for Public Health Emergency Preparedness," *Homeland Security Affairs* 5, Article 1 (September 2009), <https://www.hsaj.org/articles/95>.

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