



Standardisation Across the Continent

The Challenge of Universal Resources for Search and Rescue in the Sub-Antarctic and Antarctic Environment

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Search and Rescue in the Antarctic is a concept delivered in practice by people who are usually not professionals within this specialism. It is undertaken with equipment which may be historical and highly variable in terms of function and location and used by non-specialists.

This leads to risk to rescuer(s) and patient(s) which can and should be mitigated against as much as possible.

Standardising and modernising the training and equipment has become a key priority within the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic theatre of operations for the British Antarctic Survey Medical Unit.

This is an ongoing body of work covering:

- Assessment of current training and mapping of resources.
- Understanding the requirement- (location, resources).
- Development of combined, multi-day training packages of interdisciplinary team replicating functional unit in the Polar theatre including field guides, medical assistants and physicians in arduous conditions.
- Search and Rescue and medical care techniques from multidisciplinary professionals who work and deliver SAR in hazardous and extreme environments.
- Specific examination of cold water, shoreside and small island rescue utilising knowledge from UK sea and water rescue professionals.
- Rationalisation of medical and SAR equipment- modularised, simplified and standardised.
- Electronic mapping of SAR and Medical resources, with prompts for equipment checks, use guides etc.
- Development and review of SOPs for SAR to support high-risk decision making and support personnel both in remote site and parent nation HQ.
- Refinement and modernisation of SAR practice/ moulage in location.
- Refinement and modernisation of nation HQ table-top exercises.
- Learning and refinement of process through debrief and PDSA cycles.

Traditional approaches to knowledge and skills development in pre-deployment phase revolved around training by speciality within cohorts (i.e., medical teams and Field Guides trained in isolation); whereas it is expected that they would function as a team in the Polar theatre. Changing the faculty into multidisciplinary teams and cohorting in deployed functional units allows realistic and integrative skillset training.

Modularisation and standardisation of SAR equipment improves robustness and safety, allowing personnel to be able and competent in the use of equipment in multiple locations across the territory.

