Professionalism in a Medical Volunteer Role: Volunteers in Emergency Squad Work

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Editor's Note: The following is the official "Executive Summary" of a several hundred page study which will be published in book form in 1985.

INTRODUCTION

Volunteers save the taxpayer money, relieve labor shortages, extend services, develop necessary social programs, promote changes within existing organizations and provide links between the community and service agencies. The Gallup survey taken in 1981 indicated that 53% of all Americans did some volunteer work in the preceding year. This survey concluded that 93 million Americans volunteered their services, and these services were valued at $64 billion. In the health field the value of volunteers is measured not only in dollars, but also in terms of lives saved or lost. Volunteers provide emergency services, staff hospices, hotlines, and crisis centers, and fill personnel gaps throughout the hospital system. The largest concentration of volunteers in the health field in New Jersey is in ambulance squads. Ninety-two percent of ambulance squads in this state are nonprofit, volunteer operations. These 560 squads represent 15% of all first aid volunteers in the United States. These emergency squad volunteers are the subject of this research.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The contradiction between the popular image of the volunteer as a nonserious worker and the sociological image of the volunteer as a committed worker bears on an important question: how much can we expect from the volunteer? How accountable can we expect him/her to be? These questions can be answered in part by examining how volunteers define the work they do. The sociology of work emphasizes the importance of the concept of professionalism in differentiating among various kinds of work. This study is an attempt to understand professionalism--the extent of it and the conditions under which it develops--in volunteers. If volunteers are accorded professional status, mechanisms of internal control should operate to uphold standards. Typically, in professions, these are peer review and evaluation, improvement or recertification measures. In addition, if the volunteer is viewed as a professional, the increased prestige will make recruitment and retention easier.

One prerequisite for professionalism is the commitment by practitioners to a specific ideology. That is, the workers must believe that the characteristics of a profession apply to the work they do. That is where this research starts, namely, to determine if these practitioners (volun-

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teer emergency workers) hold a profesional definition of this work (emergency squad work). We seek to distinguish those who do from those who don't.

PROFESSIONALISM DEFINED

What are the characteristics of professional work? In this research, we use the definition developed by George Ritzer (1977). He notes that professional work has six characteristics:

1. *General, systematic knowledge. Professional work is thought to be based on specialized, technical information which requires an extensive learning process and which can only be taught by practitioners.*
2. *The norm of autonomy. The work is believed to require independence from outside interference. Only peers/colleagues are capable of setting standards, regulating and sanctioning job performance. A standardized code of ethics, developed by the profession, guides the work. Judgments by members of the profession are assumed to be expert.*
3. *The norm of altruism. A service ethic dominates the work. Professionals are primarily concerned with the welfare of those they serve. This client orientation is thought to be the result of an altruistic interest in the well-being of the larger community. This orientation, in part, results from the special "calling" that professionals feel to do their service-oriented work for others.*
4. *The norm of authority over clients. In order to best serve their clients, professionals generally insist on complete authority over those they serve. Thus professional occupational roles have a good deal of authority built into them.*
5. *A distinctive occupational culture. Professions develop occupational subcultures which include all people who do the same professional work. This subculture is supported by formal organizations, associations, or societies which often function to create a sense of national unity and identification among professionals in the same occupation. These subcultural organizations often function as a lobby group for the occupation. Professional work is marked by special norms, values, beliefs and symbols which set the occupation apart from mainstream society and promote a sense of community and common identity among members.*
6. *Recognition by the community and the law that the occupation is a profession. Professions are granted the power of autonomy and authority by the larger society. With this recognition often goes trust or faith in the altruism and the ability of the professional.*

These characteristics may not objectively describe the work but, sociologically, what is important is how people perceive both the job and the people who do the job. If the job is to be seen as a profession, it is important that the workers, themselves, believe that the work contains these "professional attributes."

The purpose of this research is to answer two questions: do emergency squad volunteers hold a professional definition of their work? Under what conditions does this attitude of professionalism develop? In the course of answering these two questions, we also discuss who does this type of volunteer work, why they do it, their attitudes toward it, how they organize as a group to deliver the service, and the support systems they rely on.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: THE SAMPLE AND THE INSTRUMENTS

From a list of all volunteer emergency squads in New Jersey, a geographically-stratified random sample of 21 squads was selected. Thirteen

of New Jersey's 21 counties were represented in the final sample. A pilot study allowed us to pretest and revise the following research instruments: a structured questionnaire, a job satisfaction scale, a professionalism scale, and a focused interview schedule. The self-administered structured questionnaire that was completed by the individual volunteers elicited data on: the number of years on the squad, hours worked per week, extent of mobility within the squad, most frequent kinds of calls of the squad, necessary skills, training, nature of complaints, reasons for volunteering, reasons for entering the volunteer role, unanticipated benefits of volunteer work, extent of support from family and friends, quality of relationships with squad members. The questionnaire also elicited data on the demographic variables of sex, age, marital status, number of children, age of children, residence, education, occupation, income, and involvement in other organizations.

The professionalism scale, derived from the work of George Ritzer, asks the respondent for extent of agreement with eight statements measuring the following distinguishing characteristics of professional work: altruistic motivation, a systematic knowledge base, adherence to a code of ethics, need for autonomy, need for authority over clients, and the existence of an occupational subculture. These questions have content validity; a pretest established the concurrent validity of the scale. Scores derived from this scale are used to measure both the individual's and the squad's level of professionalism.

The job satisfaction scale was adapted from one developed at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research by Quinn and Staines that was used in a Department of Labor survey of a national sample of workers in 1969, 1973 and 1977. The scale taps the following specific dimensions of job satisfaction: comfort, challenge, relations with coworkers, and resource adequacy. Job satisfaction is measured by the individual's degree of agreement with 13 statements.

A focused interview schedule was used to conduct interviews with squad leaders. It was from these interviews that information about the organization and structure of each squad was derived. Information on the following variables was collected: size of squad, sex composition of the squad, history/age of the squad, geographical area covered, nature and frequency of calls, vehicles owned by the squad, size and condition of physical plant, shift organization, responsibilities of members, admissions procedures, disciplinary procedures, recruitment methods, financial condition and sources, committee structure, leadership structure and turnover, extent of social activities of the squad, extent of in-house training, and community relations.

This research has both qualitative and quantitative elements. The focused interviews and open-ended survey questions produce qualitative data that describe the work experience of the volunteer squad member and the organization of the squad. These data complement the quantitative data generated by the other research instruments.

There are two levels of analysis: the individual (the volunteer) and the organization (the squad). Since the independent variables are at both the organizational and individual level, we review the characteristics and attitudes of the 514 emergency squad volunteers and the organizational sturcture of the 21 squads. These variables are used to predict the dependent variables of professionalism and job satisfaction.

Standard multi-variate analysis with appropriate tests of significance and measures of association establish the degree of statistical and substantive significance between the independent and dependent variables.

THE INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER: CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES

Based on the demographic data we conclude that our "typical volunteer" is a married man between the ages of 18 and 35 with children over the age of seven. He is a high school graduate with some college education who works full time and earns less than $30,000 per year. He lives in the town in which he volunteers and has been involved in voluntary organizations in the past. Contrary to some popular images of the volunteer, our findings show that the volunteer is not a person who "has nothign better to do with his time." Volunteers are people who are firmly rooted in the community, tied in through involvement in organizations and through their families.

Most of our volunteers have served on a squad for less than four years and devote at least 15 hours per week to this activity. Many squad leaders report that they can only expect a commitment of three to five years from the typical volunteer, since "burn-out" occurs for many volunteers after five years. Despite the public's image of the dramatic, life saving efforts of the emergency squad volunteers, most respondents reports that fewer than 10 percent of their calls can be considered life saving. Few volunteers report that their volunteer work consists primarily of saving lives. Interestingly, the volunteers realize that their most important skills are not their medical skills. They feel that it is important to reassure and control people in an emergency situation and for this they rely on interpersonal skills.

Generally our volunteers feel that their training has been very good, and many of the respondents have gone for additional training. The squad members seem to be eager for more in-squad drills. Additional formal courses are not considered to be as important as continuous in-squad drills. The volunteers seem eager to review calls, to improve techniques and procedures, and to discuss with other volunteers how to maintain and improve their emergency squad skills. The respondents are not eager to have fewer restrictions placed on the services that they perform. They are afraid that fewer limitations will reduce the number of people who can do the job or that it will change the role too radically. They do feel, however, that those people who have specific medical training should be allowed to use that training in their role as volunteers.

While the volunteers have few complaints about the nature of the work, they do complain about a lack of significant recognition from the communities they serve. The other complaint mentioned with any frequency is problems with co-workers. These are typically defined as "personality clashes" that, while annoying and unpleasant, are overcome when the squad members go out on a call.

Our data emphasize the overriding importance of the informal channels in the recruitment process. It is through friends, neighbors, and relatives that volunteer work is "demystified" and made inviting. Often it is a personal experience with a squad that allows people to imagine themselves as emergency squad workers. In overwhelming numbers, the respondents cite serving the community as their most important reason for volunteering. The second motivation for doing volunteer work is an instrumental one. Respondents indicate that they think this volunteer work might help them in their job or future career. Good feelings about themselves, new friendships and a sense of personal growth are cited as unanticipated benefits.

Those people who don't do this volunteer work are not seen as people who lack the skills to do the work. Rather they are seen as people who live busy lives and do not know enough about this work to understand how interesting and rewarding it is. All of the reasons cited by the volun-

teers, that is, all the excuses for not volunteering, are amenable to change. Potential volunteers can be educated to understand that volunteers are also busy people, that volunteer work is intrinsically interesting, and that there is little to the volunteer work that is frightening.

Our volunteers report a strong sense of support from their families and friends. Families support volunteers even though there is some recognition that this activity interferes (time and emotional costs) with family and/or job responsibility. In addition, our volunteers have a reference group of volunteers, friends who share a common interest in volunteering even if in an area other than emergency squads. The squad itself becomes, for most volunteers, a primary group. Like friends and family, squad members socialize, reward, and sustain the volunteer in his or her volunteer role.

Volunteers have a difficult time comparing this work to paid work because they see their volunteer experience as intrinsically enjoyable. The volunteers reflect a commonly held view that work is something you do because you have to. This view of work contrasts sharply with their view of volunteer work. Volunteering is work done by choice and is intrinsically enjoyable.

SQUADS: THEIR STRUCTURE AND CHARACTERISTICS

The 21 squads are all voluntary organizations which have the same stated goal: responding to the emergency medical needs of an immediate population. How they organize to reach that goal varies tremendously. Our intensive interviews allow us to point to 20 variables that describe the squad organization. Nine of these 20 variables emerge as the most significant in differentiating the squads.

Extent of Activity: Our sample ranges in size from a squad of 17 to a squad of 65 active members. Most squads have between 25 and 45 members. The number of calls a year range from 198 to 5,500. Our largest squad is not the most active squad because it is in a surburban community. The most active squad is in an urban location. Many squads are sensitive to the importance of activity for retaining members. Several squads have a cap on the number of members fearing that too many members will lead to less activity and thus to dissatisfaction. Volunteers, perhaps more than paid workers, desire to be active on the job because it is the activity, not a paycheck, that is the reason for being there.

Recruitment: One-third of the squads maintain that they have no problems with recruitment because they do not want any more members than they currently have. At the other extreme, for four of the squads recruitment problems are so severe that they have affected the ability of the squad to provide 24 hour coverage. Although most squads send out an annual recruitment letter to the community, leaders report that the most popular and successful method of recruitment is "word of mouth." This informal method promotes group solidarity by recruiting outsiders who are already known to someone in the group. It may be that personalized recruiting is necessary to demystify emergency medical work. Recruitment methods also include talks to local organizations, ads in the newspaper, and sponsoring first-aid courses in the community.

Financial status: Operating budgets range from $10,000 to $100,000 per year. Squads receive funds in varying proportions from local municipalities, fund raising letters, door to door solicitation, unsolicited donations, and a wide range of fund raising activities. A small percentage of the squads indicate severe financial problems. Those that report poor financial conditions also report a poor relationship with the community they serve. It is this connection between community

recognition and fund raising that makes squads eager for media coverage of their activities.

Relationship with the town: All squads distinguish recognition and approval from community residents from recognition and cooperation from town officials. Generally, squads feel that town residents are grateful for their efforts, although they do not always realize that the squad is unpaid. The squads are concerned about the extent of services they receive from the town (for example, snow plowing, equipment repair). No squad feels it gets sufficient newspaper coverage.

Shift organization: Squad leaders report that calls can be responded to in three ways: a scramble or a designated crew that responds either from home or from the squad house. The method of coverage usually reflects the availability of members. Most squads have difficulty with fixed shifts during daytime hours when most of their members are at work. Squads report that the women who used to cover the daytime hours are no longer available. There are indications that squads that rely on the "scramble" have problems coordinating their efforts so that a sufficient, but not excessive, number of members arrive at the emergency scene with the ambulance.

Leadership: By and large, the squads have established democratic procedures for nominations, elections, and the development of rules and regulations that guide activities. However, a range of democratic forms has developed. Some squads, though democratic in procedure, are practically leaderless, even though someone gets elected. The leader has very little designated authority. In other squads the leader has been designated a lot of authority, and he/she uses it to run the squad effectively. In a few squads, the personality of the leader dominates. Some leaders appear to be "benevolent despots," that is, strong leaders who attempt to create a family atmosphere while they play the autocratic parental role. There are a few squads that have had the same leaders for ten to fifteen years, either because the squads are very small and few people will accept the responsibility or because the leader is one of the oldest members of the squad, has a great deal of power, and does not wish to relinquish this role. A few squads have recently experienced a change in leadership and are quite conscious of leadership problems in the past.

Sociability: Squads range in extent of sociability. Some squads serve as a home away from home where people spend a great deal of time. Some have planned activities but not a great deal of informal socializing. In others, socializing is discouraged or not facilitated. It is clear that in some squads the organization of the squad does not induce or encourage sociability among members. For example, these squads are organized on a scramble system, do not have a squad house, have a weak leadership structure, and have the greatest turnover problems.

Role responsibility: There is wide variation in what leaders' expect from their volunteer members. Some leaders feel that all responsibilities are really optional and therefore are reluctant to make extensive demands on their members to attend training or business meetings or even to answer a minimum number of calls. It is the smallest, least active squads, usually organized on a scramble system, that are most likely to make the fewest demands on their members. Most squads require members to serve a minimum number of hours per week and to attend business and/or training meetings (from one to four meetings per month). Most committee assignments are optional but encouraged. In at least five squads extensive participation in fund raising activities is also required.

Bureaucratic structure: The formal organization of the squad consists of the number of leadership

positions, the number of committees, admission requirements, procedures for transition from probationary to active status and the extent of in-house training. There is great variation in the structure of the squads on all of these criteria.

TYPOLOGY OF SQUADS

Combining bureaucratic structure and role responsibility, squads can be ranked on an organizational continuum from high to low. The highly structured group consists of squads with extensive role responsibilities, numerous committees, a complex leadership structure and exacting training requirements. Interestingly, these squads have a democratic leadership style and are high on sociability. At the other end of the continuum are squads that make few or no demands on the members, have few committees and little or no in-house training program. These squads tend to have a more autocratic leadership and less leadership turnover.

Through the description of four squad types we analyze the way the nine organizational variables described above fit together to form working wholes. The "ideal types" described below are composite pictures, not precise descriptions, of any individual squad.

The highly structured squads have an extensive formal bureaucratic structure of rules and regulations that guide the squads' activities. There is an extensive committee structure, strong democratic leadership and no financial problems. Training meetings are scheduled every week to enable members to improve their skills. Squad members are very professional in their stated ideology. They frequently use the word "professional" to describe themselves. They emphasize the amount of training they give their members and their extensive "exclusive" admissions procedures. At least part of what they mean by professionalism is being serious about their work. These squads do not encourage social activities among members and, in fact, socializing is seen as a potential problem. The membership of these squads includes people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds. These squads tend to draw from large and somewhat heterogeneous communities. There is great crew-level loyalty that is defined as an important ingredient in doing a professional job.

The community squads are very tight knit with a stable membership. They have few financial problems and enjoy a good relationship with the town. They have a tradition or history in the community that is widely known and cherished. There is a real sense of being appreciated by the community. The members are drawn from the small community they serve. The membership is homogeneous, sometimes young, and people enjoy spending time together both in the squad and in outside social activities. There is some tendency in these squads to identify discipline and control as problem areas. These problems are usually defined by the age of the members and the social activities in which they engage. These squads tend to be concerned with their appearance and their image in the community.

The struggling squads tend to be loosely structured with few rules and regulations. Training requirements are kept to a minimum, and there are few drills. These squads have financial troubles and very real survival problems. They are trying to become close to the community, but at this point they are not. The membership is not very tightly knit. Relationships between people are loose, not very social. In addition, these squads tend to have recruitment problems. The leadership is either weak or very new at the job. These squads tend to make little use of their squad house. Members respond to calls, primarily from home, not from the squad house. This, in part, reflects their low degree of identification with the squad as a community of volunteers.

In our sample, this kind of squad was the most frequent.

The authoritarian squads do not have many rules or an extensive bureaucratic structure, but they are distinguished by clear leadership roles. These squads tend to have very strong leaders who hold their positions for a number of years and who rule without a lot of regulations to guide them. The emphasis is on authority, not on roles and regulations. The power of the person in the leadership role is emphasized. These leaders tend to work hard for the good of the squad, and they engender devotion or, at least, respect from most of the members. Members express a sense of commitment to the squad, which is primarily commitment to the leader. This leadership pattern can produce a very tight knit squad. In some cases there is a very strong in-group feeling among squad members. Training requirements tend to be loose. Street experience is seen as more important than "book learning" or formal training. Discipline is generally rigorous in the hands of the authoritarian leader. Some squads in this group have good relations in the town, some do not. The relationship with the town, like everything else in these squads, is a function of the leadership.

There is a correlation between degree of formal bureaucratic structure and social class, as measured by income or occupation. That is, volunteers in the highly structured squads have a higher median income and are more likely to hold professional/managerial occupations than are volunteers in the authoritarian squads. These data suggest that people use, in their volunteer work, the organizational skills that they have acquired in their occupations. The community squads and the struggling squads are not defined by their degree of bureaucratic structure, the social class of their membership, or by their attitude towards professionalism. Rather, they are characterized by their relationship with the towns they serve, their financial problems and their recruitment dilemmas, all of which are interrelated.

Our data suggest the following conclusions:

1. *The highly structured squads operate smoothly and have developed internal mechanisms of quality control. They serve the community, and local residents respond to fund raising and membership appeals.*
2. *The community squads are small, but well respected by the town and presumably stable in their ability to deliver services.*
3. *The struggling squads cannot rely on local fund raising efforts for their survival. If they are to function effectively, they will need to find new financial supports.*
4. *The authoritarian squads function well where the leadership is wise and benevolent. Then they serve the community well and are respected and appreciated. When the leadership is isolated from community influence, the squad may deviate from appropriate community service. Then the municipality needs to be in closer cooperation and control in order to assess and monitor service delivery.*

CORRELATES OF PROFESSIONALISM

Originally, we hypothesized that professionalism would be influenced by the type of squad organization. However, our data indicate that there is no correlation between degree of formal bureaucratic structure of the squad and professionalism. That is, the highly structured squads as a group don't score higher on professionalism than the authoritarian squads. In fact, there is very little variation among the squads in professionalism as measured by the median or mean professionalism score of the squad's membership. We conclude, therefore, that profes-

sionalism is an individual-level variable.

Overwhelmingly the volunteers as individuals agree that their emergency squad work is marked by professional characteristics. Ninety-two percent of the respondents agree that "there is a distinct body of knowledge required to do this work." Ninety-two percent agree that "there is a code of ethics that guides the work." Eighty-four percent agree that "there is a national or state association of people who do this work." Seventy-nine percent of the respondents agree that people who do this work are a rather select group with a certain "calling for the work." Seventy-four percent agree that "people who do this work are generally altruistic, concerned with the well-being of others rather than themselves." Sixty percent agree that "many of my good friends also do this work." Fifty-six percent agree that "only someone who actually does this work can teach it to others." Fifty-one percent that "to do this work right, I need authority over those I serve."

The data are analyzed to determine the variables correlated with professionalism and to gain a better understanding of the conditions under which professional attitudes develop. The following variables are explored: occupation, income, education, years on the squad, number of hours worked, family's knowledge of work, family's reaction, age, sex, motivation, benefits, training, relationship with squad members.

The most dramatic relationship is an inverse one between occupation and professionalism. Blue collar workers and sales and clerical workers are more likely to score high on the professionalism scale than are professional and managerial workers. Alternately, professional and managerial workers are more likely than any other occupational groups to score low on the professionalism scale. Perceiving emergency volunteer work as professional is, at least in part, dependent on the individual's occupational frame of reference. If the individual's job does not manifest the characteristics of professionalism, as defined in this study, he/she will be more likely to maximize a definition of this volunteer work as professional. Professionals and managers in comparing their paid work with this work do not find volunteer work "professional." They do not accord it the same status as their paid work. It is more likely to be the blue collar or sales and clerical workers who attribute the positive characteristics of professionalism to this volunteer work.

The relationship between occupation and professionalism is supported by the data on income and education. Years on the squad is a contributory factor in explaining professionalism; its influence varies by occupation group. That is, after ten years on the squad there is an increased chance that those in managerial and professional occupations will score high on the professionalism scale. Those volunteers from blue collar and sales occupations are more likely to score high on the professionalism scale after a shorter time period on the squad.

Additionally, we see a positive relationship between hours worked per week and the professionalism score. Does the behavior (number of hours worked) produce the attitude (defining the work as professional) or does the attitude produce the behavior? The data do not indicate which factor is the independent variable.

Those respondents who report that their families know what they do in their volunteer work are more likely to score high on the professionalism scale than those respondents who report that their families know very little or nothing about their volunteer work. In addition to family support, close warm relationships with other squad members are also associated with high scores on the professionalism scale. The data document a positive relationship between the volunteer's perception of

his/her relationship with other squad members and the definition of the work as professional.

In sum, it is clear that the person most likely to score high on professionalism is an individual who is a homemaker or is in a blue collar, clerical or sales occupation, who has a low income, less than a college education, who has been on the squad more than four years, has a warm relationship with squad members, and has a family who knows about and supports volunteer work.

Interestingly, a professional definition of the volunteer work is not correlated with age, gender, initial motivation to do the work, desire for more extensive training, or desire for fewer restrictions on the services squad members can perform.

CORRELATES OF JOB SATISFACTION

For the past several years the United States Department of Labor has pointed to a decline in job satisfaction in the American labor force. The University of Michigan's surveys document this decline. In these surveys, workers are asked a series of questions about specific aspects of their job. We ask those same questions of the volunteers. On eight of the thirteen statements the volunteers are more satisfied than workers in the American labor force. A higher percentage of volunteers than paid workers indicate agreement with the following statements: the physical surroundings are pleasant. The work is interesting. I have an opportunity to develop my own special abilities. I am given a chance to do the things I do best. I am free of the conflicting demands that other people make of me. I am secure in my volunteer position. I have enough information to get the job done. My supervisor is competent in doing his/her job. There are five items that elicit some measure of dissatisfaction. The volunteers do not strongly agree with the following statements: The hours are good. I am free of conflicting demands. I am given a lot of freedom to decide how to do my own work. I have enough authority to get the job done. My chances for advancement are good.

The strongest predicter of job satisfaction is holding a professional definition of the volunteer work. The two scales, professionalism and job satisfaction, are positively correlated. Volunteers who define this work as professional are more likely to also define the volunteer work as a satisfying experience on a number of dimensions.

IMPACT OF YEARS ON SQUAD

We were interested in determining whether newer volunteers have different attitudes and different levels of job satisfaction than more experienced volunteers. Since the relationship between years on the squad and professionalism is a weak one, it is possible to say that people do not grow into an attitude of professionalism, but come already prepared with the "right orientation." If new members do not see this volunteer work as professional when they join, they are unlikely to acquire this perception over time. Additionally newer members are just as likely as more experienced members to say that their families have a positive reaction to their volunteer work.

Although high levels of satisfaction are found among all volunteers, newer members are more satisfied with the hours, more positive about the physical surroundings, less likely to recognize conflicting demands being made on them, more likely to endorse the idea that they can develop their own special abilities through volunteer work, and more likely to feel that there are chances for advancement within the volunteer organization. Thus we see that the new volunteer begins with a very high level of satisfaction. This is understandable given the element of choice involved in being an emergency squad volunteer. Those who stay with volunteering do not experi-

ence a significant decline in levels of satisfaction. They may become more critical of the conditions of the work, but, at the same time, they become more secure in their ability to get the job done.

POLICY IMPLICATION

The last chapter of this report discusses the policy implications of these research findings as they relate to the issues of recruitment, retention, and increased professionalism among volunteers.

To Aid Recruitment

1. The individual who volunteers is one who has a very strong sense of identification with the community in which he lives. Thus, it is important to develop a sense of community among town residents which, in turn, will foster volunteerism.
2. Informal recruitment is more effective than formal recruitment methods and therefore should be emphasized. The informal approach (primarily word of mouth) seems to bring in "the right people" with "the right attitudes" and encourages warm relationships between the new volunteer and those already on the squad.
3. Formal recruitment methods (door-to-door canvassing, annual letters to the town, talks to community organizations) are important primarily as a way to educate the public to the existence of the squad and the dedication of its members.
4. Emergency squad volunteers emphasize the importance of interpersonal rather than medical skills. Recruitment and training efforts should not neglect these skills.
5. The gender, age, and initial reason for volunteering are insignificant in terms of the attitude of the volunteer toward professionalism and should not be emphasized as criteria for admissions.
6. Public relations campaigns should educate the public to the unanticipated benefits and rewards of volunteering. The public needs to know that the work is neither difficult, frightening, nor boring.

To Aid Retention

7. Governments--local and state--should recognize the monetary value of squad services and their need for financial support. They should help with direct financial aid and support services.
8. Volunteers need and want responsibility and activity. Squads should consider capping their membership levels so that each volunteer feels necessary to the operation of the squad.
9. Since volunteers see the most value in in-house rather than formal course training, squads should provide regularly scheduled opportunities for a review of calls, procedures, and equipment.
10. Squad members should not be fearful of using the squad house as a place to congregate and to hold social gatherings. Social activities among squad members encourage strong supportive bonds which are necessary in this type of work.
11. Most volunteers have a "volunteer life" of approximately five years. Burn-out is a phenomenon that should be anticipated.
12. The major source of dissatisfaction and low morale in volunteer work is inadequate community support and recognition. Many times lack of support is attributed to lack of information about the squad and/or the voluntary nature of the organization. Local governments should recognize the importance of positive recognition and should extend courtesies whenever possible to encourage and support volunteer activities.

To Foster Professionalism

13. Volunteers from lower socioeconomic occupations are the ones most likely to derive intrinsic rewards from volunteer work and to define it as professional. Volunteerism among lower socioeconomic groups should be encouraged.
14. Those individuals most likely to define the role as professional are also most likely to show a high degree of satisfaction with the work. Therefore, a professional definition is to be encouraged if only because it leads to high levels of job satisfaction and commitment to the work.
15. The organizations that volunteers create differ significantly in their degree of bureaucratic structure and leadership style. There are a variety of apparently successful types of squad organizations. Organizational structure does not seem to influence either degree of professionalism or job satisfaction.
16. Finally, our theoretical model of professionalism suggests that professionalism can be fostered by 1) emphasizing the solid base of information upon which the technical portion of emergency squad work is based, 2) allowing the volunteers to work free of outside control or interference, 3) emphasizing the altruistic motivation of most volunteers, 4) encouraging volunteers to accept the authority they have within the emergency situation, 5) encouraging volunteers to see themselves as part of a larger group of medical emergency personnel, and 6) encouraging the community to recognize the professional elements in this volunteer work.