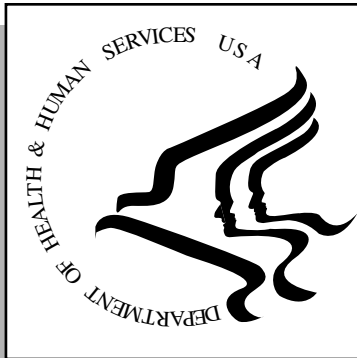
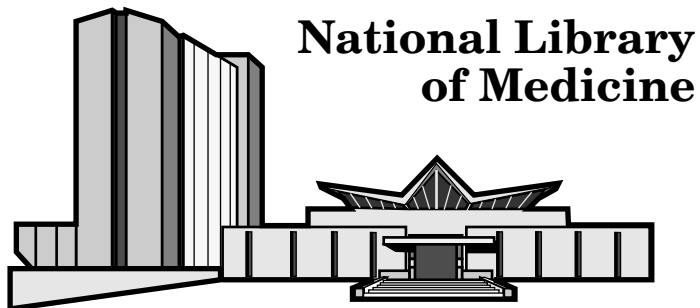


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INTRODUCTION

There are many challenges in how we communicate risk, especially risks to health. Few areas continue to stir debate more than advances in medicine and biotechnology. Stem cell research, vaccine development, and genomic manipulation are but a few of the areas under recent attack. Even public health successes that have decreased morbidity and mortality--such as vaccination, air bags, and fluoridation--have been surrounded by controversy. Scientific and health literacy require understanding, but the incremental and imprecise nature of science and experimentation that contribute to defining risk thrives on doubts, criticism, and debate, which often translate into only theoretical causality and "risk." Furthermore, scientifically valid information is not absolute and may change over time. Translating theoretical (imprecise and incomplete) and changing knowledge of causality and risk has developed into its own body of knowledge called "risk communication." According to a 1996 National Research Council report* risk communication "emphasizes the process of exchanging information and opinion with the public."

Recognizing the challenges to health progress that lie in the communication process, not in the laboratory, we created this issue for the *Current Bibliographies in Medicine* (CBM) series. Our overarching goal was to identify a body of published knowledge relating to risk communication from multiple perspectives. This bibliography was also developed to complement the presentations at the International Symposium on Health Risk Communication: Uncertainty, Stakeholders, and Public Health Action held on November 1-3, 2000 in Bethesda, Maryland. The Symposium was sponsored by the Subcommittees on Risk Communication and Education and International Health of the US Department of Health and Human Services Environmental Health Policy Committee. Citations for the bibliography were gathered from sources including, but not limited to, bibliographic databases, online catalogs, the Internet, and printed publications. Single words ("risk" and "communication") and the phrase "risk communication" were used to search electronically. The contents of some journals were also searched and reviewed in print or electronically. From the 4,000 bibliographic citations located through these sources, English language publications about risk communication were selected which focus primarily on risk communication of scientific information rather than on risk assessment, risk management, risk factors, risk behavior, risk taking, decision making, hazard communication, duty to warn/informed consent, or other dimensions of communicating about health risks. Similarly, this publication does not focus on health interventions, health education, health promotion, or advertising, although these are important topics in the overall picture of how scientific risks are communicated to the public. The scholarship in each of these other subjects alone is far greater than could be represented here. Our concern for this bibliography is with the presentation of scientific risk information; the strategies, tactics, and models that are used to communicate scientific risk information to an audience; and the difficulty of translating scientific knowledge in a meaningful way to enable the public to make informed health decisions.

In the efforts to meet the challenges imposed by scientific progress, perhaps this CBM can help to advance a common lexicon for health literacy, risk comprehension, and public health priorities. Use of such terms such as "infinitesimal" and "probable" in defining risk place a great responsibility on those who determine what information is valuable and salient for their audience. A high ethical standard has thus become necessary for the purveyors of health--whether they are in academia, marketing, publishing, (new) media, or other fields of

* Stern, Paul C.; Fienberg, Harvey V., editors. *Understanding risk: informing decisions in a democratic society*. Washington (DC): National Research Council, Committee on Risk Characterization; 1996. p. 27.

public address. To facilitate optimal decision making, finding ways to increase the quality of information becomes more important than increasing the quantity of information. Ideally, this CBM and the symposium it supports will contribute to the body of communication knowledge that advances salient, valuable, factual, and ethical risk information.

The compilers wish to thank Dorothy Moore of the Specialized Information Services Division, NLM, for her valuable assistance in the production of this bibliography.

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SAMPLE CITATIONS

Citations in this bibliographic series are formatted according to the rules established for *Index Medicus*^{7*}. Sample journal and monograph citations appear below. For journal articles written in a foreign language, the English translation of the title is placed in brackets; for monographs, the title is given in the original language. In both cases the language of publication is shown by a three letter abbreviation appearing at the end of the citation.

Note also for journal articles that an availability statement follows many citations. This statement contains the Internet address for the citation in the NLM PubMed® retrieval system. The PubMed record includes an abstract for most articles and may also provide a link to the publisher's Internet site.

Journal Article:

Authors *Article Title*

Gotsch WD, Griffith BC. Strategies to improve risk communication: foreword.
Health Educ Q 1991 Fall;18(3):269-71.

Abbreviated Journal Title *Date* *Volume* *Issue* *Pages*

Monograph:

Authors/Editors *Title*

Bennett P, Calman K, editors. Risk communication and public health.
New York (NY): Oxford University Press; 1999. 272 p.

Place of Publication *Publisher* *Date* *Total No. of Pages*

*For details of the formats used for references, see the following publication:

Patrias, Karen. *National Library of Medicine recommended formats for bibliographic citation*.
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