



The difference in perceptions of risk between experts and non-experts is merely quantitative not qualitative

Although the effect of expertise on risk assessment is evident, it is limited to the very narrow area of expertise. For example, in a study by Sjöberg and Drottz-Sjöberg (1994) a group of experts on nuclear waste and ionizing radiation judged the risk of all hazards related to the nuclear technology as low, which was expected. However, surprisingly, the experts saw the risk of radon gas (which is also a type of radiation risk) as high as the public saw it. Furthermore, as previously presented, it turns out that the structure of experts' risk perceptions itself is not different from the pattern of risk perception dimensions found in the general public, i.e. it seems that the very same dimensions explain risk perception in both experts and non-experts (Sjöberg, 2002; Sjöberg, 2004). Although expertise leads to the more objective (i.e. lower, in most cases) estimation of risk of particular adverse events, the difference in risk perceptions between experts and non-experts seems to be merely quantitative, not qualitative, and limited to the area of expertise. In the domains outside of the primary expertise, experts are also subject to psychological factors such as fear and uncontrollability like the general public.

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Socio-economic status](#)

Disaster Phases: [Prevention](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [Non-active citizens](#), [National research bodies](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#), [Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations](#), [Man-made intentional hazards](#)

Recommendations:

- [Develop risk assessments methodologies, which consider cultural factors, the manner in which people cognitively process information and which employ a gender perspective](#)

Source

[Deliverable D4.1 "Mapping risk perception concepts in the context of disasters" \(page 44\)](#)

This file was generated automatically on: 12.02.2019.

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