

Title: Risk communication from a government perspective: Advantages of a collaborative approach.

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In Canada, Health Canada operates the Canadian Radiological Monitoring Network (CRMN) to monitor, detect, and assess radiation in the environment across the country. The network was successfully used to confirm that the radiation levels caused by the Fukushima accident airborne plume were low and were not of health concern in Canada.

When the dust settled, 5 things became clear: 1. Most of the radiation was released in the ocean, 2. The oceanic plume would take years to reach Canada, 3. The radiation levels that would reach the Canadian Coast were expected to be low and not of health concern, 4. Measurements of the oceanic radiation levels in Canada would be technically and logistically challenging 5. Misinformation about Fukushima radiation levels and associated risks was being widely disseminated in Canada.

The poster will show how joining the Integrated Fukushima Ocean Radionuclide Monitoring (InFORM) network collaboration helped Health Canada meet some of the challenges it faced. The InFORM collaboration, lead by Dr. Jay Cullen of the University of Victoria, involves academic, government, non-governmental organizations and citizen scientists. It aimed to monitor the arrival of the oceanic plume, assess radiological risks to Canada's oceans associated with the accident and effectively disseminate this information to the public.

Joining the collaboration certainly positioned us outside our government comfort zone. Citizen scientists gathered the costal water samples. Indigenous communities provided the Biota samples. Results were discussed on a website we did not control. In the end, joining the collaboration has proved to be extremely productive and beneficial. The advantages included: allowing us to leverage our measurement capacity to contribute to a much comprehensive scientific effort; engaging directly with Indigenous communities and citizen scientist to discuss our results helped us better understand and addressed their concerns; making our monitoring data more widely disseminated and understood. And finally, contributing to offer Canadians scientifically sound sources of information of the impact of the Fukushima accident in the Canadian context which helped counteract the wide presence of misinformation on the subject.