

Minutes -- May 8, 1992 Colorado Task Force on Lightning

1. Members present:

Cherington, D Clark, S Clark, Estep, Collier, Holle, Langford, Larson, Lopez, Stahlhammer, Vellman, Wright.

2. Members reviewed three questionnaires sent to us from Maureen Moore, RN, North Colorado Medical Center. Raul Lopez and Ron Holle stated that these three cases from 1991 and 1992 were not in their news files and are already an example of "underreporting" of lightning data injury. Raul presented an outline of the various current data collection methods which are based on newspaper reports collected for NOAA Storm Data. Our group will do an independent newspaper search. We will also now have data from the various centers responding to our questionnaire. Raul will send a copy of this data collection scheme to me in the next few days. He, Ron Holle, and Ken Langford will continue their newspaper search and present the information at our next meeting. They will code the data on lightning strikes by date of newspaper publication plus date of event. I suggested that if they need help on this project, they might bring some of the newspaper clippings to the next meeting where some of us could volunteer to share in this effort.

We hope that by the end of the summer season, we will have enough data to analyze and prepare some conclusions for possible publication.

3. Kathy Butzin has been unable to be present at our meetings and she asked that Susan Stahlhammer take her place on the Task Force. Ray Coniglio sent a letter of resignation from the Task Force because of other projects. He applauded our efforts.
4. Ken Langford told us about the October 1992 meeting in Boulder of the Association of American Weather Observers. He will check with the editor of their newsletter about submitting a notice of our activities and possibly inviting the Colorado members of AAWO to help in our data collection.
5. We restated some but not all of our goals:
1. People with various backgrounds and training who share an interest in the phenomenon of Lightning have a place to discuss their ideas and learn about the ideas of others.
  2. It is universally understood that lightning injuries and deaths are underreported. Our Task Force can make a major contribution to the information on lightning injuries by developing a Lightning Data Center with the purpose of obtaining data using the methods mentioned above. This project will limit its scope to Colorado for now, but may include other states in the future. This undertaking will a major focus of our Task Force at this time.
  3. Our Task Force will serve an educational function for the

public, medical groups, scientific groups, etc.

4. Correlate meteorological data with other information regarding lightning strikes.
6. Jerry Estep and Peter Vellman will be speaking to paramedics from about 18 associated emergencies centers on the subject of lightning. They will ask the paramedics to keep a log of all lightning injuries -- both the severe and the mild.
7. I mentioned my meeting editors of various publishing houses regarding submitting a "book" on lightning. I met these editors earlier this week at the American Academy of Neurology meeting in San Diego. They all stated that the best approach is to focus on a certain "audience" such as primary physicians or emergency department physicians. The Task Force members all were enthusiastic about our undertaking this project.

The current plan is as follows:

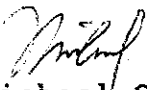
1. We will submit ideas on specific chapters on lightning injuries or related subjects that would be of interest to the Emergency Department Physician. Each of us will submit this with a summary of everyone's curriculum vitae to me within the next two weeks.
2. Peter Vellman and Jerry Estep will write a chapter on the "do's and don't's" for the ED physician. They might also want to deal with the role of the ED physician in directing the paramedics in the field. The importance of prolonged CPR efforts and change in the usual triage system might be worth discussing.
3. Cherington will write a chapter dealing with the neurological effects of lightning strikes. I can also write a chapter on the occupations and recreations at particular risk.
4. I will ask Jodi Chambers to consider writing chapters on treatment of burns and secondary trauma effects (fractures from falls, etc.)
5. Raul Lopez and Ron Holle will write about the technology of lightning detection and how these methods can be helpful to physicians and the public in preventing lightning injuries.

6. Steve Clark, Richard Collier, Ken Langford, Ron Larsen, Susan Stahlhammer, and Charles Wright will work together in writing a chapter that will include: Lightning safety tips, "debunking" myths about prevention rules (e.g. are tires a source of safety?). Perhaps and other chapter on effects of lightning on power lines, appliances in the house, etc.

We might also want a chapter on the "Physics of Lightning" -- made simple.

7. Good news/ bad news section. Bad News: Raul Lopez and Ron Holle recently received news that the Boulder NOAA group are being relocated to Norman, Oklahoma. Good News: They will remain active in our Task Force.
8. Meeting adjourned at 1330 hr. (Began at 1130 hr.) after a most lively, informative, and enjoyable session.
9. Next scheduled meeting: Friday, June 12, 1992 at 11:30 am at St. Anthony Hospital 3- North Sunporch.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Michael Cherington, M.D.