Letter to Editor: A Critique of the Information Resources of Disaster Databases in the World

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Today, disaster databases have become valuable tools for disaster risk management. They are used for various purposes, from risk assessment in the insurance business and socioeconomic analysis to policymaking to reduce disaster risk [1].

Accurate information sources and data mining are the main principles of these databases. Some databases with years of experience have well-established data collection methods. Their knowledge is of high quality and value and can be used to create and improve a disaster database at other levels [2, 3].

Disaster databases collect their data from various sources, such as official reports and announcements, the Internet search, reports of humanitarian action by NGOs, data compiled by academic institutions, media reports, etc. In the meantime, the arguments are in favor of including newspaper reports as one of the main sources of information in the disaster database because a) newspapers cover events on a local scale more than other sources, b) a similar incident or event is often reported in different newspapers, so it is possible to compare and screen the facts, c) newspapers are usually better at maintaining and accessing their archives, d) newspaper information is better than other media sources, such as television and the Internet and covers a longer time [4].

Among the authoritative global and international databases, EM-DAT, Sigma, and NatCat-SERVICE have experts evaluating data set quality control, while DesInventar data quality is government-controlled [5, 6]. Despite the standard definitions of disasters and human impacts in each database, a wide heterogeneity exists between databases in terms of the type of data collected, the volume of data, and the data availability depending on the focus and methods of collecting each data [7].

In the context of the unequal and discontinuous increase in the risk of disasters and their effects, the need to collect and share disaster impact data is crucial to protect people and reduce economic damage [7].

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