

Study examines use of drones to aid emergency responders in mass casualty events

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In the wake of a disaster, a difficult challenge for emergency response crews is to quickly assess damage and identify victims. Researchers at UMass Medical School are conducting a study to determine how unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), also known as drones, could play a key role in such mass casualty incidents.

Edward Boyer, MD, PhD, professor of emergency medicine, said drones could be used to identify individuals who may be buried under rubble and find them faster so that first responders can intervene and provide medical attention. Dr. Boyer and colleagues Peter Chai, MD, assistant professor of emergency medicine, John Broach, assistant professor in emergency medicine, and Alex Hart, resident in [emergency medicine](#), are conducting the study.

With funding from Massachusetts Central Homeland Security Advisory Council and Worcester Emergency Management, researchers are working to establish that the technology could work in real-time and provide significant help in assessing an [emergency situation](#). They are determining whether [drones](#) could lead to better analysis of the situation and care of patients. If so, they hope to train first responders how to use the technology in the field.

The team has plans to test the technology at a disaster training drill in Worcester in September.

Provided by University of Massachusetts Medical School

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