MISPER-UK: Web-based Missing Persons app released

PETE ROBERTS & CARL HAMILTON

The Centre for Search Research (TCSR) is pleased to announce the release of a web based app we have developed. MISPER-UK has taken over a year to create and is based on our long established and much used, paper-based, UK Missing Person Behaviour Study. This study is based on a database of incidents compiled from reports from mountain rescue teams who have been called out by the police to search for a missing person or persons and covers a period of nearly twenty years.

Tables, clockwise from top left: Distance table; By location found pie chart; By outcome pie chart; Location table.

Left: Pete Roberts and Carl Hamilton.

The app uniquely interrogates this database, which is regularly updated to produce statistics, based on different categories of missing persons to show typical locations where they have been found, condition when found and distance travelled from where they were last seen or known to be, so the information provided will always be the most up-to-date available.

It puts UK missing person behaviour statistics in the pocket of the search manager for the first time, giving them immediate access to the information whenever it is required and there is internet access via smartphone, tablet or other connected device. Though the app is readily available, it is intended to be used by experienced search managers and will be used extensively in The Centre for Search Research's Managing the Initial Response training course.

The use of missing person behaviour statistics is fundamental to the planning process that underpins a typical response to a search for a missing person. The statistics, in conjunction with a subject profile, the incident history (where, when and how they became missing) and a detailed map analysis of the area, combine to construct likely scenarios to explain where the missing person might be. These scenarios are then translated into tasks for search teams to action.
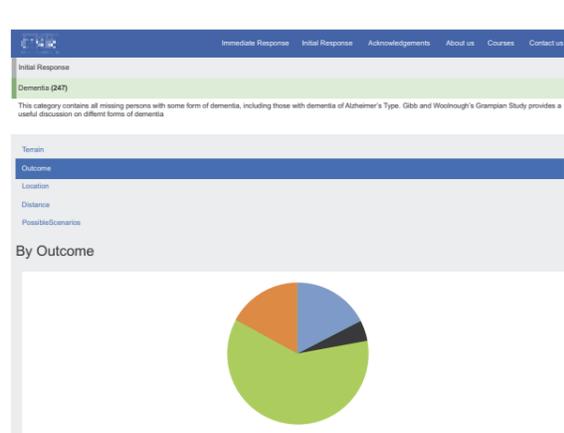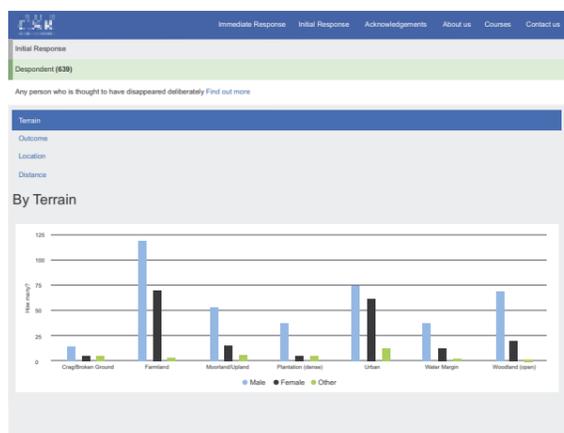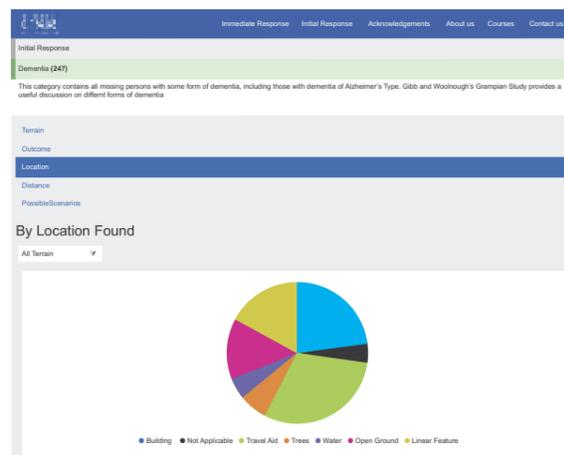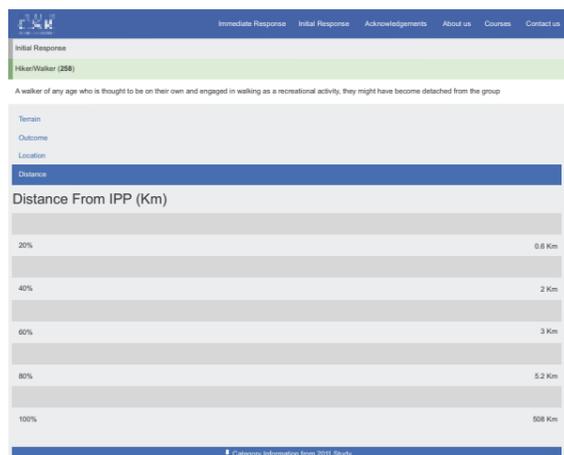
MISPER-UK will help speed up the planning process and make contemporary UK based statistics more readily available. And this will, hopefully, lead to a speedier outcome for the missing person and lives will be saved. It is aimed at the police who have statutory responsibility for responding to missing person incidents and to volunteer mountain rescue teams who they call in to assist.

'It will be a game changer in the search for missing persons, many of whom are vulnerable and can succumb to the elements if a speedy response is not made,' said Gordon Millward, a trustee of The Centre for Search Research and a retired commander with Northumbria Police. Gordon has extensive experience of working with mountain rescue teams in the search for missing persons.

We believe this use of contemporary technology is a significant development on how missing person behaviour statistics are accessed. Launched in late September, the app will be available free from http://misper.uk

The Centre for Search Research are actively fundraising to develop the app further and also produce a 'native' app, removing the need for an internet connection. It will be a powerful tool in the search manager's toolbox and we hope to make it fully available, again at no cost, by the end of the year.

For further details of this and other work go to www.searchresearch.org.uk

To add the MISPER-UK app to your homescreen for easy access:

1. Go to http://misper.uk/
2. Click on the three dots in the top right of the screen
3. A drop down menu will appear
4. Click on 'Add to Home Screen'
5. Name the app MISPER-UK
6. Click on 'Add'
7. An icon representing a direct link to the app will now appear on your Home Screen