

1 **Effective earthquake early warning systems: Appropriate messaging** 2 **and public awareness roles**

3 Meng Zhang¹, Xue Qiao^{2,3}, Barnabas C. Seyler¹, Baofeng Di^{1,4}, Yuan Wang¹, Ya Tang^{1,3}

4 ¹ Department of the Environment, College of Architecture and Environment, Sichuan University, Chengdu 610065, China

5 ² Institute of New Energy and Low-carbon Technology & Healthy Food Evaluation Research Center, Sichuan University,
6 Chengdu, China

7 ³ State Key Laboratory of Hydraulics and Mountain River Engineering, Sichuan University, Chengdu 610065, China.

8 ⁴ Institute for Disaster Management and Reconstruction, Sichuan University, Chengdu 610200, China.

9 *Correspondence to:* Ya Tang (tangya@scu.edu.cn)

10 **Abstract.** The earthquake early warning systems (EEWSs) in China have achieved great progress, with warning alerts being
11 successfully delivered to the public in some regions. We examined the performance of the EEWS in China's Sichuan
12 Province during the 2019 Changning Earthquake. Although its technical effectiveness was tested with the first alert released
13 10 s after the earthquake, we found that a big gap existed between the EEWS's message and the public's response. We
14 highlight the importance of EEWS alert effectiveness and public participation for long-term resiliency, such as delivering
15 useful alert messages through appropriate communication channels and training people to understand and properly respond.

16 **1 Why are earthquake early warnings important?**

17 An earthquake is an intense shaking of the Earth's surface, caused by the sudden movement of a plate in the Earth's crust.
18 Destructive earthquakes, such as the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake (M_w 7.9) in China, the 2010 Haiti Earthquake (M_w 7.0),
19 and the 2011 Tohoku-Oki Earthquake (M_w 9.0) in Japan, trigger multiple secondary hazards (e.g., landslides, tsunamis, and
20 Natch disasters). These earthquakes cause millions of deaths, widespread property damage to buildings and infrastructure,
21 and severe regional economic fallout. Earthquakes are impossible to avoid, and predicting their occurrence remains difficult,
22 so more and more countries have focused on developing earthquake early warning (EEW) and emergency management
23 systems.

24 An EEW is the detection and characterization of earthquakes as they occur with rapid delivery of alerts to areas potentially
25 affected before the strongest shaking begins (Allen and Melgar, 2019). Because most of an earthquake's energy is carried by
26 the damaging S- and surface waves, which arrive after the faster and lower amplitude P-waves, EEW is possible because
27 both waves travel far slower than the electromagnetic waves used to transfer information (Cremen and Galasso, 2020).
28 Although the potential warning time may only be seconds to minutes, this time is precious so that individuals and institutions
29 (e.g., airports, trains, manufacturing, and energy facilities) can take action to save lives and mitigate the potential damage
30 from earthquakes (Strauss and Allen, 2016).

31 **2 EEW systems and their applications**

32 Generally, EEW systems (EEWSs) are real-time information systems that consist of three modules, including: 1) monitoring
33 and detecting earthquakes based on seismic networks; 2) EEW processes, e.g., estimation of location, magnitude, maximum
34 seismic intensity, and earliest arrival time, as well as alert notification decisions; and 3) information delivery (Cremen and
35 Galasso, 2020). The importance of EEWSs for disaster mitigation has been widely studied. Many jurisdictions have
36 operational systems to deliver alerts to the general public (e.g., Mexico, Japan, and South Korea), or target specific
37 stakeholders in limited areas (e.g., United States, Turkey, Romania, and India) (Allen and Melgar, 2019, and references

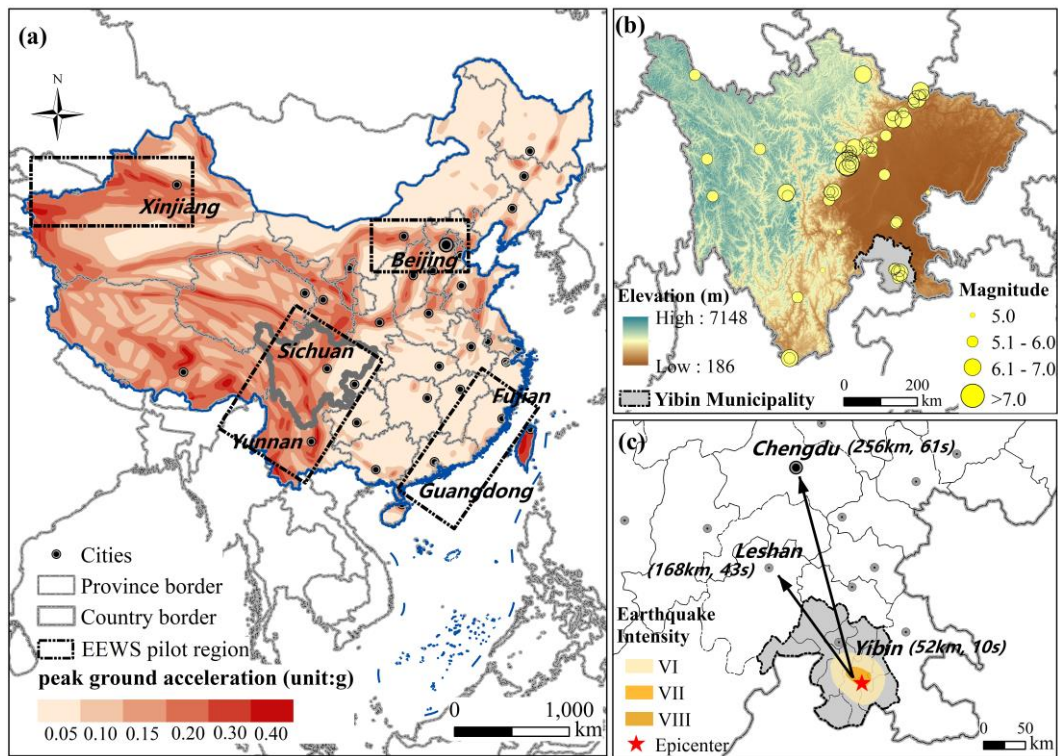
38 therein). There are also some EEWSs in the preparation and testing stages, including in Switzerland, Italy, China Mainland,
39 Nicaragua, and Chile (Allen and Melgar, 2019, and references therein).

40 Although the theory of EEWSs is simple, the implementation is much more complicated (Allen and Melgar, 2019). An
41 effective EEWS must accurately provide estimated earthquake parameters with long enough warning time to be of practical
42 use for recipients where possible damages may occur. Therefore, most research over the last three decades has focused on
43 evaluating the systems and optimizing their algorithms with the goal of enhancing the quality and accuracy of EEWSs.
44 However, several technical challenges are revealed by reviewing the EEWS development (Allen et al., 2009; Allen and
45 Melgar, 2019; Cremen and Galasso, 2020; Hoshiba and Ozaki, 2014; Kamigaichi et al., 2009). For example, 1) it is hard to
46 provide timely warnings in areas closest to epicentres (e.g., the blind zones); 2) when more than two earthquakes occur in
47 close temporal or spatial proximity, the estimation parameters become hard to process and the error substantially increases; 3)
48 the unsaturated magnitude and seismic intensity of large earthquakes ($M > 8$) may be underestimated, such as the Tohoku-Oki
49 Earthquake (Hoshiba and Ozaki, 2014); and 4) the EEWSs may not work properly due to power failures, wiring disconnects,
50 and high background noise caused by large earthquakes and their aftershocks.

51 Recently, more and more scholars have devoted attention to increasing EEWS effectiveness through social means (e.g.,
52 Santos-Reyes, 2019; Sutton et al., 2020), which can alleviate the limitations that are difficult to solve with technical
53 innovations. For example, Japan's EEWS has significantly contributed to reducing social vulnerability to earthquakes
54 through nationwide participation. Most of the alerted respondents could understand and act to protect themselves due to their
55 previous education and training, although the magnitude of the 2011 Tohoku-Oki Earthquake was under-estimated due to
56 technical limitations, resulting in poor-quality alerts (Fujinawa and Noda, 2013; Hoshiba and Ozaki, 2014). In addition, the
57 United States' EEWS (ShakeAlert) enables recipients to immediately participate in the alert process and define the system
58 capability to enhance public participation, which is currently being tested in California, Oregon, and Washington states
59 (Allen and Melgar, 2019). Comparatively, Mexico's EEWS detected and issued warnings for the 2017 Puebla Earthquake;
60 however, the public took a negative attitude towards its performance since they received little information about either the
61 EEWS or the warnings themselves and had not been previously educated how to act during an emergency situation (Santos-
62 Reyes, 2019). These events demonstrate the importance of EEWSs, but also show the critical importance of public
63 awareness education and training before an earthquake occurs, to activate the full benefits of EEWSs.

64 **3 China's EEWS Development**

65 China's EEWS development is particularly challenging because multiple regions are prone to earthquakes, including major
66 metropolitan areas. Therefore, following the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake, China's central government encouraged the
67 establishment of a national EEWS, initially focusing efforts on four seismic regions for pilot testing (**Fig. 1a**). With support
68 from the "National System for Fast Seismic Intensity Reporting and Earthquake Early Warning Program" led by the China
69 Earthquake Administration (CEA), a high-quality national seismological network was installed with 15,000 stations, 1,928
70 seismic stations (equipped with collocated broadband seismometers and force-balanced accelerometers), 3,114 strong-
71 motion stations (equipped with force-balanced accelerometers), and 10,349 low-cost micro-electro-mechanical system
72 (MEMS)-based sensors (Peng et al., 2020). The instruments aimed at quickly reporting earthquake intensities and earthquake
73 early warnings in key areas on the minute and second scales, respectively. EEWSs in the pilot regions (e.g., the Beijing
74 capital region, southeastern coastal areas, north-south seismic belt, and northern Xinjiang) are now operational and have
75 proven technologically effective to some degree (e.g., physical networks, algorithms, software). Detailed descriptions can be
76 found in Peng et al. (2011), Peng et al. (2020), and Zhang et al. (2016), but few of these studies have focused on the
77 information dissemination mechanisms and public perception to the EEWS.



78

79 **Figure 1** Seismic activity and EEWSs across China. (a) Distribution of earthquake intensity and EEWSs in various Chinese regions
 80 (modified from seismic peak ground acceleration zonation map of China; Standardization Administration of the People's Republic of
 81 China, 2015); (b) historical earthquakes (January 1949-August 2020) in Sichuan Province; and (c) location of the Changning Earthquake.

82 3.1 Fujian case

83 As one of the main pilot areas, a provincial EEWS was first built in Fujian in 2009, with 125 seismic monitoring stations
 84 (equipped with velocity and acceleration meters) across the whole region with an average distance of 31 km between them.
 85 Each station connects to the Fujian Earthquake Agency (FJEA) for EEW processing and information release through
 86 dedicated optical fiber cables provided by China Telecom. The preparatory process of Fujian's EEWS included two steps: 1)
 87 design the EEWS and test its technical capabilities (Zhang et al., 2016); and 2) design the content and criteria for issuing
 88 EEW alerts to the public (Zhang et al., 2016), which is similar to the development of Japan's EEWS (Kamigaichi et al.,
 89 2009). The FJEA can issue alerts and authorized third parties can forward these alerts through multiple channels, including
 90 broadcast (television and radio), special terminals, Internet, and smartphone Apps¹. EEW alert receiving terminals are
 91 preferably installed in schools, factories, and residential communities, especially those in high earthquake risk areas, where
 92 the coverage rate must be greater than 60%. More importantly, when, what, and how to deliver an EEW alert is regulated by
 93 provincial standards². For example, only when the predicted seismic intensity is greater than VI (Chinese intensity scale)³,
 94 will FJEA warn the provincial public with red or orange signal icons (I and II EEW) and sounds. Fujian's EEWS began
 95 issuing alerts to the public in 2017, and Fujian's successful model was later extended to other regions in China.

96 3.2 Sichuan case

97 Sichuan is a major earthquake-prone region. Based on the China Earthquake Networks Center (CENC,
 98 <http://www.ceic.ac.cn/history>), 73 earthquakes above magnitude Ms 5.0 occurred in Sichuan between the 2008 Wenchuan
 99 Earthquake and April 1, 2020 (**Fig. 1b**). A hybrid demonstration EEWS was built in the border region between Sichuan and

¹ The mobile app Earthquake Warning in Fujian can be downloaded at <http://www.fjdzi.gov.cn/ar/2018050814000013.htm>.

² Release of earthquake warning information (DB35/T 1666-2017). (In Chinese)

³ The Chinese seismic intensity scale (GB/T 17742-2008).

<http://c.gb688.cn/bzgk/gb/showGb?type=online&hcno=AE2DAA79A7404FFAC73A9F3A33FBAA5A> (In Chinese)

100 Yunnan provinces in 2015, with 270 MEMS-based stations, as a part of China's EEWS (Peng et al., 2020). The real-time
101 data recorded by these stations can be transferred through 3G/4G mobile network to the Sichuan Earthquake Administration
102 (Peng et al., 2020). In contrast to the hybrid demonstration EEWS introduced in Peng et al. (2020), Sichuan's EEWS is
103 operated by a third-party (Institute of Care-Life, ICL) in collaboration (at the municipality and county level) with the
104 Emergency Management Bureau (Wang and Lin, 2020). The recent *M*_s 6.0 Changning Earthquake happened at 22:55 PM on
105 17th June 2019 in southeast Sichuan's Yibin Municipality, triggering an alert in some cities across the province, including
106 Yibin (52 km from epicenter), Leshan (168 km), and Chengdu (245 km) (**Fig. 1c**). The alerts were issued approximately 10 s,
107 43 s, and 61 s prior to major shaking in the above cities, respectively. It was the first time that an EEWS alert was triggered
108 to the general public in Sichuan, which generated great public interest and confusion.

109 In Chengdu, the provincial capital city, the alert was delivered in several ways, including broadcast sirens, as well as text
110 messages on televisions and cell phones that had special applications installed. The broadcast siren notified the most people
111 with speakers located in more than 110 residential areas. The alert began with a countdown, followed by loud alarm sirens.
112 However, few people understood what the siren pertained to or what was about to happen with only a countdown and then
113 siren. Only when the shaking began did most people realize the alarm was intended to warn of an impending earthquake.
114 Most people reported that when the countdown began over broadcast speakers followed by the siren, they were confused and
115 unsure what to do. They did not know what was happening or what would happen, because the countdown and siren were
116 unaccompanied by clear audio messages with explanatory information. Many people interpreted the alarm as a firemen's
117 duty task, an air raid alert test, an explosion, theft alarm from a car or electric bicycle, or a special sales event. Clearly, due to
118 the diversity of reactions, the alert caused more confusion, fear, and disturbance than what was intended by the EEWS. Some
119 people were less concerned with the earthquake than by the confusion over the loud countdown and siren, as it was nearly
120 midnight.

121 We examined the public perception of Sichuan's EEWS during the Changning Earthquake through an internet-based survey
122 conducted June 21-23, 2019, in Chengdu. The online questionnaire was administered by the survey platform Wenjuanxing
123 (<https://wjx.cn>) and delivered to the public via social media (WeChat). We received a total of 770 responses. The survey
124 contained 11 questions in total, with 9 quantitative (single choice) and 2 qualitative (free response) questions, related to
125 demographics, earthquake preparedness and knowledge, behavioural responses to EEW alerts, and reasons for those
126 responses (see questionnaire in the Supplement). Survey respondents were asked whether or not they had heard the sirens on
127 the day of the earthquake, and based on their response, the participants were divided into two groups: 1) those who heard the
128 broadcast siren alert in real time (Group A, n=261) and 2) those who did not (Group B, n=509). Although participants in
129 Group B had not heard the sirens on the day of the earthquake, both groups were shown a video of the siren/alert at the time
130 of the survey to detect their behavioural responses to the sirens. The descriptive information, basic frequency, and cross-
131 tabulation analyses of the collected data were undertaken using SPSS software (Lee Abbot and Mckinney, 2013). For cross-
132 tabulations, statistical significance was determined using the Pearson Chi-Square test.

133 Demographics of respondents can be found in **Table 1**. We separately tested for differences between the two independent
134 sample populations for each response. The results (**Fig. 2**) show that large pluralities of both groups (Group A, 41%; Group
135 B, 45%; $p < 0.001$) did not understand the purpose of the alert and felt confused or scared by it. The proportion of
136 respondents from both groups who stated that they understood the alert but did not know how to react was the same (7% vs.
137 7%, $p < 0.001$). Surprisingly, a significantly larger proportion of respondents from Group B understood and knew what
138 actions to take (32%, $p < 0.001$) than Group A (21%, $p < 0.001$). Of those from Group A who knew what actions to take, their
139 knowledge came primarily from previous training (26), hearing a brief note at the beginning of the alert (11), being informed
140 by people nearby when the alert was ongoing (7), or for several other reasons (11). Because so few people knew what the

141 alert was about or recognized what was about to happen, most people did not have sufficient knowledge or awareness of the
 142 correct actions to take. Consequently, this alert could have caused additional problems, including injuries or cardiovascular
 143 problems due to fear or panic from the sudden high-decibel sirens blaring over loudspeakers, and the resulting confusion
 144 could also have led to more acute harm if the shaking level had been higher.

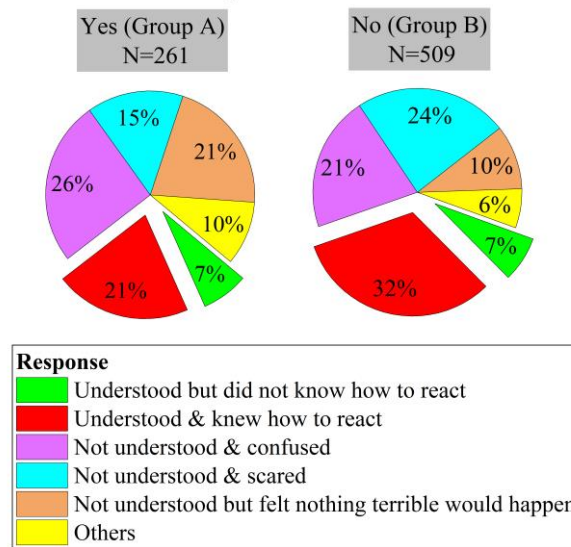
145 We also tested the role demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, and occupation) may have on predicting how the public
 146 may respond to EEWs and their earthquake awareness. The results (Table S1) show that both gender and occupation were
 147 significantly associated with how the public responds to earthquake warnings. From our sample results, it appears males and
 148 people holding certain occupations (e.g., governmental organizations and emergency institutions) were more likely to have
 149 already received the type of pre-earthquake training necessary for them to know how to respond to the earthquake warnings.
 150 If this is true, special effort should be made to target those segments of the population that were under-prepared. However,
 151 due to the likelihood of self-selection bias in our sample, more research is necessary to verify and further explore the
 152 implications of these findings so as to better inform policy and guide future pre-earthquake preparedness efforts.

153 **Table 1** Demographic profile of internet-based survey participants regarding responses to early warning of Changing earthquake (N=770)

Variable		N	%
Gender	Male	220	28.6
	Female	550	71.4
Age	≤18	5	0.6
	19-30	204	26.5
	31-40	326	42.3
	41-60	165	21.4
	>60	70	9.1
Education level	Primary or below	28	3.6
	High school	69	9.0
	Undergraduate	491	63.8
	Postgraduate	182	23.6
Occupation	Students, educational employees, and academics	167	21.7
	Governmental organizations	58	7.5
	Emergency institutions and companies	97	12.6
	Private business and farmers	330	42.9
	Other	118	15.3
Earthquake training and education	Yes	518	67.3
	No	252	32.7

154 Note: The category of emergency institutions and companies refer to those that typically require earthquake alerts, such as hospitals,
 155 railways, and factories with hazardous environments. The category of “others” included those without formal jobs and retirees.
 156

Whether Respondents Heard Siren



157

158 **Figure 2** Public responses to the siren/broadcast speaker of early warning for the Changning Earthquake from an internet-based survey in
159 Chengdu, China.

160 4 EEWS Limitations and Implications from Sichuan

161 The Changning Earthquake's example highlights some challenges with Sichuan's EEWS. We are not arguing against issuing
162 earthquake alerts, however, this event and the resulting confusion raises four important issues that should be addressed
163 moving forward.

164 First, a big gap exists between the intention of an EEWS and its reality in Sichuan. The most important intended effect of an
165 EEW is to enable residents to take protective actions within the short time before the shaking arrives (Nakayachi et al., 2019).
166 Only when an EEWS is sufficiently tested and widely publicized (Kamigaichi et al., 2009) can people understand the
167 meaning of an alert and take appropriate actions (Kamigaichi et al., 2009). When installed in a residential area, inhabitants
168 should be notified about the system, and most importantly, informed about what actions they should take after receiving an
169 alert, but before shaking begins. In the case of the EEWS's alert in Chengdu following the Changning Earthquake,
170 inadequate efforts had been made to inform the public prior to the earthquake, so few people were able to understand or
171 respond appropriately to the alert. The experience of countries like Japan shows that public training, education, and
172 widespread awareness campaigns about EEWSs are the key factors to their success (e.g., Fujinawa and Noda, 2013;
173 Kamigaichi et al., 2009).

174 Second, of vital importance is what and how to deliver actionable warnings to the public. An effective early alert should not
175 only inform the public about hazards, but also protective actions (Allen and Melgar, 2019; Sutton et al., 2020). The default
176 messages must be simple, because the content and comprehension of EEW messages should result in people taking
177 appropriate actions (Allen and Melgar, 2019; Becker et al., 2020a; Santos-Reyes, 2019). Messages can be instructions (e.g.,
178 Drop, cover, and hold on; US), origin time, and names of epicenter regions and subprefecture areas (e.g., Earthquake early
179 warning. An earthquake has occurred in Area X. Please prepare for strong temblor; Japan) (Kamigaichi et al., 2009; Allen
180 and Melgar, 2019). Providing information about expected shaking intensity or arrival time (countdown) are not
181 recommended, as these can lead to unnecessary panic (Allen and Melgar, 2019; Kamigaichi et al., 2009), but some studies
182 hold the opposite viewpoint (Santos-Reyes, 2019). Furthermore, the information and alerts should be delivered in stable,
183 useful, and suitable ways. As our case study shows, some claimed that the earthquake itself did not scare them as much as
184 the blaring siren did. It seemed unnecessary to use sirens on loudspeakers that day, especially during the night. While the

185 advantage of using sirens is that it rapidly reaches people simultaneously, the use of such “shocking” alarms is needed only
186 with high risks and likelihood of considerable damage. For those that may not lead to casualties or considerable social or
187 economic losses, use of more “gentle” alert channels is recommended. Alerts delivered over the radio, TV, SMS messages,
188 emails, and smartphone applications have shown greater effectiveness in documented cases (Hoshiba and Ozaki, 2014).

189 Third, at what level of seismic intensity the alert should be triggered is a key issue. It is essential to avoid the fabled “boy
190 crying wolf” or over-alerting, which can lead to public frustration and apathy, so alert messages should not be issued unless
191 the shaking is expected to cause considerable damage. The Changning Earthquake did not cause strong motion or significant
192 damage in Chengdu, but 15% and 24% of the participants from Groups A and B (**Fig. 2**) were terrified by the alarm sound,
193 respectively. At the time, Sichuan did not have specific criteria for when to issue EEW alarms. The provincial standard was
194 only issued in April 2019, so it had not yet been formally implemented. According to this standard (draft version)⁴, a
195 warning should only be issued (to the general public) when the seismic intensity is expected to be VI on the Chinese scale.
196 However, despite the higher level in Yibin, the seismic intensity in Chengdu was lower than VI (**Fig. 1c**), so the alert should
197 not have been issued in Chengdu. In addition, there continues to be insufficient guidance about how to handle false alarms,
198 updates, and canceled warnings.

199 Fourth, earthquake alerts should be released by an authoritative government agency. The public should be informed that only
200 alerts from the authorized body are reliable. But it was unclear who released the alert on June 17, 2019. There can be many
201 third-party warning service providers, who forward EEW messages by multiple transmission routes. Yet, according to
202 Sichuan’s draft standard, the publishing body should only be the Provincial Earthquake Warning Release Center. In addition,
203 the Sichuan case shows that one region may have multiple EEWSs (Wang and Lin, 2020), which will raise greater
204 challenges regarding best practices for issuing EEW and popularizing how to interpret them. Therefore, greater supervision
205 and management systems are urgently needed in Sichuan’s EEW practice.

206 The most important component of a successful EEWS is a group of users with awareness and preparedness, who want alerts
207 and will take protective actions (Allen and Melgar, 2019). The next is the physical infrastructure and sensor system (Allen
208 and Melgar, 2019). The Changning Earthquake warning event showed that the transmission and utilization of the EEW
209 lagged behind the technological development and physical construction. Moreover, the public in affected areas were not
210 well-informed by EEWS alerts, nor were they adequately trained on how to respond. Therefore, we highlight the successful
211 public education and preparedness training model from Japan’s seismic culture, because the relatively poor understanding of
212 an EEWS by the public can result in confusion. Useful strategies include: 1) launching education programs on what actions
213 should be taken before, during (at various timeframes), and after an earthquake (Santos-Reyes, 2019). Research indicates
214 that alert messages with guidance on actions may be useful as a reminder to achieve optimal behavioral responses, but only
215 when people are already familiar with these actions prior to receiving a warning (Becker et al., 2020b); 2) carrying out drills
216 and exercises to improve personal practical skills and earthquake preparedness (Nakayachi et al., 2019), which is particularly
217 important for regions new to EEWSs. Yet, beyond what actions are necessary to take in response to warnings (Ji et al., 2019;
218 Sutton et al., 2020), the public also needs education regarding the technical limitations and accuracy of EEWSs (Kamigaichi
219 et al., 2009). We also suggest that Chinese scholars should focus more effort on the public response to and perception of
220 EEWSs to get more insights for issuing alerts, managing emergencies, and making policy.

⁴ Sichuan Seismological Bureau organized institutions to complete the drafting of “emergency earthquake information release earthquake warning information”. The local standard draft was published for public comments.

http://www.scdzj.gov.cn/jlhd/yjzi/202004/t20200429_54006.html (Accessed on April 29, 2020)

221 Furthermore, due to differences in geological settings, socio-economic development statuses, and population densities, losses
222 caused by earthquakes of the same magnitude can vary greatly. Therefore, it is also very important to decide where an
223 EEWS should be set up. Since earthquakes are disasters faced by many countries, collaboration in development and
224 application of EEWSs among countries or regions should be encouraged, so that appropriate efforts are made to reduce loss
225 of life and property when earthquakes occur, despite their inability to reduce losses in epicenter areas.

226 Several limitations of the present study and current scholarship are as follows. First, our research revealed that what and how
227 to deliver actionable warnings to the public is of vital importance, but we also found that differences exist even between
228 countries with relatively mature EEWSs. For example, some research on the public's perception of Mexico's EEWS
229 highlighted the need to issue warning times (Santos-Reyes, 2019), while other studies thought it was unnecessary (Allen and
230 Melgar, 2019; Kamigaichi et al., 2009). More work is needed about what and how best to deliver warnings in the Chinese
231 context. Second, many studies concluded that education and training are crucial for enhancing earthquake preparedness
232 (Nakayachi et al., 2019; Santos-Reyes, 2019; Sutton et al., 2020), but few tested whether these strategies were useful or not.
233 Local people's knowledge about earthquake risks as well as their previous training/education about how best to respond
234 were ascertained in our survey by asking whether respondents had previously received training and/or obtained education.
235 Nevertheless, the lack of reliable data about dissemination of earthquake awareness training and education materials is a
236 challenge for these types of studies. Further research efforts should investigate strategies to increase public attention to this
237 aspect of EEWSs.

238 **5 Conclusion**

239 The Changning Earthquake warning event demonstrated that EEWSs are not simply technological engineering infrastructure,
240 but they are also social systems for disaster mitigation. There will be no substantive benefit without proper knowledge and
241 appropriate emergency responses by the public, even if the warning is issued accurately and timely, as evidenced by the
242 experiences of Mexico and Chengdu, China. Although authoritative government agencies have emphasized that information
243 release services are the "last kilometer" for earthquake warning systems to reach the public, the actual implementation
244 showed that the "last kilometer" was not obstacle-free. It is worth considering how to best release and effectively convey
245 early warning information based on China's actual reality, not an idealized situation. The construction of EEWSs, issuance
246 of alarms to the public, and formation of public awareness by science education are inseparably related. We recommend that
247 China should collect best practices of EEWS utilization domestically and internationally in cases of EEW alert delivery to
248 the public for the purpose of more effective promotion of EEWs. Finally, greater collaboration among countries would
249 benefit many more people around the world.

250 **Author contributions**

251 YT and XQ designed the research. BFD and WY conducted the survey. MZ and XQ performed the data curation, formal
252 analysis, and wrote the original paper. YT, XQ, and BCS were responsible for supervision. All authors participated in
253 improving the paper by editing.

254 **Competing interests**

255 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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