Don’t Look Up

The Academy Award-nominated movie Don’t Look Up is about a group of astronomers who discover a comet on a collision course with Earth. The scientists determine the impending event will destroy all life on the planet and report this finding to the proper authorities, including the President. Yet most of the authorities and the media remain indifferent to this information.

I have discussed this film with people who work in system safety and risk management, and have found that some are reminded of events that have actually happened. Of course, these actual experiences did not involve events quite as serious as a comet collision with Earth, but they were serious potential events with clear mechanisms of occurrence. The variability of reactions of people to potentially high-risk events is an interesting area of research that I hope International System Safety Society (ISSS) members will pursue in the future.

The first technical paper in this issue, “A Comparison of Incident Investigation Outcomes and Safety Recommendations between Clinical Safety and AcciMap Experts,” was written by Oseghale O. Igene and Christopher W. Johnson. This paper builds on previous work regarding National Health Service (NHS) Scotland clinical safety practitioners and their first experience in applying the standardized AcciMap approach. The paper includes a discussion of its advantages and limitations.

The second technical paper, “The Importance of Safety Equity in Transportation System Safety” by Dr. Anne L. Garcia, posits a fundamental shift to a human-centric perspective on transportation system safety — the foundation for determining the level of transportation safety equity outcomes.

The third technical paper, “Model Based Functional Safety – How Functional Is It?,” was written by Barry Hendrix, Thomas E. Lewis, Melissa Emery and Brian Rachele. This paper shows how valuable model based functional safety approaches can be for complex software-intensive integrated systems in evaluating safety-significant systems and functions.

This issue’s “TBD” column by Charlie Hoes discusses how ISSS activities burn hot for a period of time but then seem to ebb. We also received some interesting letters to the editor for this issue. I hope this will be a trend.