

MEETING ABSTRACTS**Use of Mobile Health Units in Natural Disasters – A Scoping Review**

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Background/Introduction: As natural disasters continue to cause human suffering and contribute to health inequalities, Mobile Health Units (MHU) provide medical aid to people deprived of health care. However, the service modality has received criticism related to logistical difficulties, irregular service provision, and adaptability. Although MHUs may be of value, there is a significant knowledge gap regarding their usefulness on addressing health needs in natural disasters.

Objectives: To elucidate the use of MHUs in natural disasters in adherence to WHO Classification for Emergency Medical Teams.

Method/Description: A scoping review was conducted following the framework by Arksey and O'Malley. Twenty-six bibliographic databases and websites were screened for white and grey

literature published from 2000–2021 reporting on the use of MHUs in natural disasters.

Results/Outcomes: Thirteen publications were included in the final analysis, highlighting seven themes: key characteristics, services, staff, benchmark indicator, operational availability, self-sufficiency, and pre-deployment preparedness. All documents described the mobile approach to increase access to health services in the absence of regular health care. MHUs were mostly reported to provide out-patient care with medical needs primarily related to non-communicable diseases. Basic trauma care was less reported on. The main challenges concerned transportation, coordination, and communication.

Conclusion: Data on the use of MHUs in natural disasters are scarce with inconsistent reporting of key aspects. The literature adhered to previous research and WHO guidelines to some extent. Further research is deemed necessary to evaluate the interventions and outcomes of MHUs following natural disasters.

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