Patient Healthcare Following a Disaster: Guidelines for Family Doctors

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Introduction: Health effects of disasters are mostly consistent across hazard types. Those working in communities affected by disasters have an opportunity to provide surveillance and early management to patients affected by disaster through increased understanding of the epidemiology or health consequences in the days, weeks, months, and years after disasters. Disasters have been called a social determinant of health and population-level changes or social determinants that have been documented post-incident. Environmental and community disruption contribute to health effects. Consequent health effects are evidenced across body systems, affecting both physical and mental health.

Aim: To develop guidelines for primary care patient review following a disaster, based on the temporal pattern of disease epidemiology.

Methods: A systematic review of the literature was undertaken to examine the epidemiology of health consequences following disasters.

Results: Guidelines for Family Doctors based on the literature review were developed to assist preventative care, surveillance, early identification of emerging conditions, and ongoing management of pre-existing disease.

Discussion: Healthcare management in disasters focuses on acute healthcare in emergency departments and hospitals. However, healthcare is also being provided in primary healthcare settings during the first days to weeks of the catastrophe, with many health consequences ongoing in the weeks, months, and years after the event.

Seven First Minutes - Community Emergency Response Training

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Introduction: Following a mass casualty incident (MCI), it can take several minutes for emergency medical services (EMS) to arrive. The course was developed by Magen David Adom (MDA) based on unique experience in dealing with MCIs, and the time between alerting emergency services to such an incident until they arrive. The course is focused on teaching the general public to channel their desire to help in such a situation into useful skills which can potentially improve patient outcomes. The seminar focuses on key principles such as safety, calling for help, providing an accurate picture of the scene, and initiating basic treatment with an emphasis on hemorrhage control.

Aim: MDA examined the ability of the general public with no previous medical training to perform a basic triage and treatment in an MCI situation. Additionally, the study examined the abilities of the study groups to manage a scene until the arrival of EMS based on the principles taught in the course.

Methods: MDA has sent teams of instructors around the world to teach over 1,000 participants. Upon completing the course, the participants partake in a drill that assesses their ability to manage a scene of 20 patients. Their ability to initiate the call for help, provide an accurate picture, initiate treatment, and give an accurate report to arriving emergency responders are examined.

Results: The average times were recorded. Within 38 seconds, dispatch was alerted to the situation. Within 2:30 minutes, treatment was initiated for all patients. Within 4:37 minutes, the scene was fully under control, and within 6:37 minutes, an accurate report was transferred to EMS on the scene.

Discussion: The participants demonstrated an unexpected willingness to learn, practice, and partake in the drills, and the results were unexpected.

A Surprise Mass Casualty Incident Simulation: Does It Improve Knowledge or Is It Just a Bit of Fun?

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Introduction: We opened a national conference in Australia with a surprise mass casualty simulation scenario of a van versus multiple persons outside the conference venue. The purpose of this exercise was to increase awareness of, and preparation for, mass casualty incident (MCI) events for the conference delegates who were paramedics, emergency department nurses, and doctors.

Aim: The aim of the research is to understand whether a surprise MCI simulation is a useful way to increase knowledge and motivate preparedness.

Methods: A survey hosted on Qualtrics was circulated to delegates via email. The survey was designed by the research team and had 38 questions about demographics and responders’ experience with MCIs, as well as their perceptions of the simulation exercise. The questions were a mixture of 5-point Likert scales, multiple choice, and short answers.

Results: The majority of respondents were clinicians (n = 66, 76%) and those who worked in emergency departments or the prehospital setting (n = 75, 86%). While the majority had not responded to an MCI in the past 5 years (n = 67, 77%), more than half (n = 50, 57%) had undertaken MCI training during