

Investigating the Role of Emergency Nurses and Disaster Preparedness during Mass Gathering in Saudi Arabia

Authors : Fuad Alzahrani, Yiannis Kyratsis

Abstract : Although emergency nurses, being the frontline workers in mass-gatherings, are essential for providing an effective public health response, little is known about the skills that emergency nurses have, or require, in order to respond effectively to a disaster event. This paper is designed to address this gap in the literature by conducting an empirical study on emergency nurses' preparedness at the mass-gathering event of Hajj in Mecca city. To achieve this aim, this study conducted a cross-sectional survey among 106 emergency department nurses in all the public hospitals in Mecca in 2014. The results revealed that although emergency nurses' role understanding is high; they have limited knowledge and awareness of how to respond appropriately to mass-gathering disaster events. To address this knowledge gap, the top three most beneficial types of education and training courses suggested are: hospital education sessions, the Emergency Management Saudi Course and workshop; and short courses in disaster management. Finally, recommendations and constructive strategies are developed to provide the best practice in enhancing disaster preparedness. This paper adds to the body of knowledge regarding emergency nurses and mass gathering disasters. This paper measures the level of disaster knowledge, previous disaster response experience and disaster education and training amongst emergency nurses in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is anticipated that this study will provide a foundation for future studies aimed at better preparing emergency nurses for disaster response. This paper employs new strategies to improve the emergency nurses' response during mass gatherings for the Hajj. Increasing the emergency nurses' knowledge will develop their effective responses in mass-gathering disasters.

Keywords : emergency nurses, mass-gatherings, hajj, disaster preparedness, disaster knowledge, perceived role, disaster training, previous disaster response experience

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