

Importance of Field Hospitals in Trauma Management: An Experience from Nepal Earthquake

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Abstract : On 25th April 2015, a 7.6 magnitude earthquake struck Gorkha district of Nepal, which resulted over 8,790 deaths and 22,300 injuries. In addition, almost one-third of the country's healthcare service has been disrupted. A total of 1,211 health facilities became non-operational, due to 446 completely and other 765 partially damaged. Nearly 84 percent (375 out of 446) of the completely damaged health facilities are in the 14 most affected districts. As a result, the ability of health facilities to respond to health care needs has been harshly affected. In addition, 18 health workers lost their lives and 75 are injured, which added further challenges in the delivery of health services. Thus, to address the immediate health needs in the most devastated areas, Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) in coordination with IFRC and Nepal Government, 8 Field hospitals established with surgical capacities, where around 492 international Emergency Response Units (ERUs) Members are mobilized for 3 months period. More than 54,000 patients have been treated in the Red Cross operated field hospitals. Trauma cases accounted 9,180 (17%) of the total patients off which 1,285 (14%) are major surgical cases. Most of the case loads 44,830 (83%) are outpatients and 9,180 patients got inpatients service. Similarly, 112 births have been performed in the field hospitals. Inpatient mortality rate remained 1.5% (21 deaths), many of them are presented with critical injuries or illnesses. No outbreak has been seen during the ERU operation. Deployment of ERUs together with national health workers are very important to address the immediate health needs of the affected communities. This will ease for transition and handover of emergency service and equipments to local provider. Likewise, capacity building of local staff as on the job training on various clinical teachings would be another important issue to look at before phasing out such services.

Keywords : trauma management, critical injuries, earthquake, health

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