

Assessment of the Staff of an Emergency Department Training in the Hospital Emergency Incident Command System

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Objective: Dokuz Eylül University Hospital and its Emergency Department is one of the best equipped, staffed, and designed centers throughout Turkey. Despite this, until the two recent devastating earthquakes took place in Turkey, we were not sufficiently ready for a disaster. This lack of preparedness was, and, to a certain extent, still is so countrywide. To rectify this condition, the medical director of our hospital invited a group from the United States to train a group of physicians and nurses about the "Hospital Emergency Incident Command System" (HEICS). Beginning with the Emergency Department, all of the staff working in the hospital began to be trained. At the end of the course, the audience was asked to complete the standard questionnaire consisting of nine questions. Our main goal was to evaluate the staff about their perception of the disaster management system, a system that is very new to Turkey.

Methods: All of the staff of our Emergency Department (doctors, nurses, paramedics, secretaries, etc.) received a standard four-hour course about HEICS. A standard questionnaire was completed immediately at the end of the course. Their answers were later evaluated by one of the trainers.

Results: Thirty-three people attended the course. The results were as follows:

1. Distribution of the jobs of the audience: Three physicians (9%); 17 resident physicians (51%); five nurses (15%); three paramedics (9%); five clerk, secretary, etc. (15%)
2. Does your hospital already have a written disaster plan? Yes, 27 (82%); No, 3 (9%); and "I don't know", 3 (9%)
3. Would you like to participate in the disaster plan of your hospital?: Yes, 33 (100%); No, 0 (0%);
4. The disaster plan of your hospital is similar or the same as HEICS? Yes, 24 (74%); No, 8 (24%); No comment, 1 (2%)
5. Do you believe that HEICS can be successful and effective for your hospital? Yes, 30 (90%); No, 0 (0%); No comment, 3 (10%)

At the end of this course, do you believe that you could be able to be (Certainly agree, Agree, Agree a little, Don't exactly agree, don't agree):

6. Informed about a new disaster management system: 13 (40%); 19 (57%); 0 (0%); 0 (0%); 1 (3%)
7. Informed sufficiently about HEICS: 4 (12%); 19 (57%); 9 (28%); 0 (0%); 1 (3%)
8. Use HEICS plan for a possible disaster: 16 (49%); 11 (35%); 4 (13%); 0 (0%); 1 (3%)
9. Say that you are ready for a disaster: 2 (6%); 5 (15%); 13 (38%); 13 (39%); 2 (6%)

Conclusion: The rate of participation in the course was 100%, though it was not mandatory. This may indicate that

the staff is interested in the subject, perhaps due to the fact that they are working in an Emergency Department and/or because of the earthquakes we recently experienced. Interestingly, a large percentage of the staff believed that our hospital already has a written disaster plan. While this is not completely true at the moment, work is being done to establish a thorough plan. This is unlike most of the country's other hospitals. One hundred percent of the staff wants to participate and be involved in this plan.

A very large percentage of the staff believes that this new disaster management system (HEICS) seems to work efficiently during a possible disaster. Again, a very large percentage of the staff was very happy to listen and be informed about such a new subject. Perhaps one of the most striking results was that a high percentage of staff thought that they still were not ready for a new disaster, despite having taken the course and experienced several large earthquakes. Though we have a fairly limited number of results, we can claim that our hospital will be more successful using the HEICS plan during a disaster. Dokuz Eylül University Hospital is now one step ahead, having been trained about HEICS. We now are more prepared to both spread this knowledge and to minimize casualties at any disasters that may occur.

Key words: disaster; education; emergency department; hospital; incident command system; planning; preparedness; training

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Volunteer Disaster EAM and Field Triage Drill

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Objective: Emergency Medicine Association of Turkey (EMAT) has a disaster team that includes emergency physicians, nurses, paramedics, and volunteers. This group was first established after the two devastating earthquakes experienced in 1999 in Turkey. The team is trained to work at triage sites. As a new and unique disaster and emergency medicine association, our objectives with this drill are: (1) to make the team knowledgeable on field triage, (2) to develop a standard approach to the disaster victims and injured people, (3) to evaluate the patients and find out which of them need immediate intervention, and (4) to teach the team members the importance of use of the triage tags.

Methods: The drill was planned to be at the Izmir City Municipal grounds on 17 August 2000, the first anniversary of the Kocaeli earthquake. There were 100 EMAT members that participated during the drill acting as wounded people. They all had make-up and knew what their problem was. Their disease or injury was written on a paper pinned over their chest. Sixty of the injured were sorted as green, 20 were yellow, 5 were red, and 15 were black. The volunteers that joined the drill to act as wounded were given their coloured badges. On the paper badge, each person had information about their problem. They