


## MEETING ABSTRACTS

### What Happens After They All Go? Addressing the Gap between Field Hospital Departure and Restoration of Local Health Facilities Following Sudden-Onset Disasters

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**Background/Introduction:** Field hospitals present an attractive solution for Emergency Medical Teams due to their portability and ease of assembly, yet are generally designed to be temporary, often leading to a gap until permanent facilities are restored after a sudden-onset disaster.

**Objectives:** The objective of this paper is to understand the duration of field hospitals deployed to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake, identify the time taken to re-open permanent facilities, and propose approaches to better address this gap.

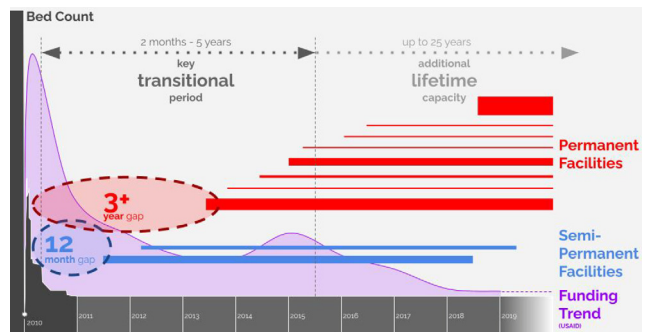
**Method/Description:** Following a review of field hospital typologies and standards, a comparative study was conducted of five key field hospitals deployed to Haiti. Quantitative data from in-house reports, limited available studies, and mapping exercises were complemented with qualitative findings through interviews with key personnel. Additional data were collected for another 21 field hospitals, confirming the rough duration of 26 of the total 44 field hospitals deployed for Haiti. This was compared against information available on the re-opening of major permanent health care facilities.

**Results/Outcomes:** The results indicated most field hospitals were decommissioned after two-to-six months. Some semi-permanent facilities opened in their wake, but not until

18-24 months. Permanent facilities started re-opening after approximately four years, however the main 500 bed hospital did not fully re-open until almost 10 years after the disaster.

**Conclusion:** Provision of more durable, semi-permanent structures during early relief stages could better capture the initial funding impulse as well as reduce the gap of bed numbers as field hospitals reach the limit of their viable lifespan, lasting until more permanent facilities are re-opened often many years later.

### Tables and Figures (optional)



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