

Health, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) and the Institute of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology (IFMT) in collaboration with the College of Forensic Pathologists of Sri Lanka. A working group representing forensic and legal experts, military, police, fire brigade department, and disaster management were involved in drafting these guidelines. Further guidelines for the effective conduct of mass burials following mass disasters were also prepared and published in 2007.

Discussion: Despite all these efforts the efficacy of managing dead in recent mass disasters is still far from satisfactory.

Prehosp Disaster Med 2019;34(Suppl. 1):s147–s148

doi:10.1017/S1049023X19003297

Mass Gatherings and Youth Peer Volunteerism

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Introduction: Music and sporting events are mass gatherings with unique risks related to participation. “All-ages” events, which include participants below the age of majority (18 in many jurisdictions), have been observed to have an over-representation of patient presentations in the youth category. Peer helpers may lower the barrier to seeking on-site care. Youth (peer-aged) volunteerism provides opportunities for exposure to new environments, skills, and mentorship. Medical volunteerism may promote personal satisfaction through prosocial behavior (i.e., helping others), community engagement and immersion into a potential health professions career path.

Methods: We conducted an observational pilot feasibility study with feedback forms and semi-structured interviews. The pilot program paired youth with parents/guardians/responsible adults as health care volunteers at special events.

Results: Youth/adult dyads volunteered for a variety of events in Canada during the 2018 event season. All participants in the “Juniors Program” completed at least a Standard First Aid course, including orientation to personal safety and confidentiality. Each pair worked in one of two areas: first aid or Festival Health (the harm reduction space at music events) providing peer-to-peer and “all-ages” support. Post-event feedback from the dyads revealed many positive experiences and universally called for more opportunities.

Discussion: A strong volunteer base is an asset to any community. In this pilot study, the volunteer experiences were supervised by a team of credentialed health care professionals. The authors report on qualitative feedback in themes based on patient perspective, volunteer perspective, team perspective, and event management perspective. More research is needed to measure the outcomes of the Junior’s Program. More investigation is needed to determine not only the long-term benefits of participation on event medical teams, but also to identify factors that shape a positive experience for youth, their parents, and the event participants that they support.

Prehosp Disaster Med 2019;34(Suppl. 1):s148

doi:10.1017/S1049023X19003303

Measuring Student Nurses’ Preparedness and Resilience for a Disaster Setting

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Introduction: Nurses have long been utilized in disaster response and recovery and they possess broad skill sets, which are critical in times of crisis. However, studies show that more than 80% of nurses who volunteered in disasters settings have no disaster education.

Aim: This project explored the disaster knowledge, preparedness, and resilience of 2nd and 3rd-year undergraduate student nurses in a Bachelor of Nursing Science program in a regional university to garner support for the introduction of dedicated disaster nursing education, which is currently absent from Australian undergraduate nursing curricula. Whilst disaster management processes in Australia are robust and Australian health care systems have explicit plans in place, the same cannot be said for all countries and health care systems. Australian trained nurses are highly valued and actively sought in the global health workforce market. In a world marked by increasing change and instability, the lack of dedicated disaster education and skills in the largest health workforce increases the overall vulnerability.

Methods: Data were collected using the Disaster Preparedness Evaluation Tool, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, simple demographics, and a previous disaster experience questionnaire.

Results: The results highlight important gaps in current practice and vulnerabilities in the current disaster management framework. Local students scored higher results in preparedness and resilience.

Discussion: Student nurses are an underutilized resource in disaster preparation and by response teams around the world. With a global intent of shared responsibility and increased resilience in individuals and communities before, during, and after disaster events, dedicated capacity building of nursing staff has the potential to address key factors and simultaneously utilize an underappreciated demographic of student nurses. To the best of the author’s knowledge, this project is the first to explore disaster knowledge, preparedness, and resilience in undergraduate student nurses using validated disaster preparedness and resilience tools in Australia.

Prehosp Disaster Med 2019;34(Suppl. 1):s148

doi:10.1017/S1049023X19003315

Measuring the Masses: Guidelines for Publication of Case Reports on Mass Gatherings

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