



MEETING ABSTRACTS**Establishing a National Emergency Medical Team (EMT) in Papua New Guinea (PNG)**

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Background/Introduction: Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a Pacific nation of over nine million. It is one of the world's most diverse nations, with over 800 languages and geographic diversity that includes both tropical islands and highland mountains. Located on the Pacific "ring of fire," PNG is regularly struck by disasters and outbreaks. The COVID-19 pandemic triggered multiple deployments of international EMTs to PNG, which were coordinated through a national EMT Coordination Cell. To strengthen rapid, national response to future emergencies, the PNG Government through its National Department of Health is now developing the "PNG EMT."

Objectives: To describe the development of the PNG EMT.

Method/Description: PNG's national EMT development was inspired by multiple international EMT deployments, including the 2018 Highlands earthquake and multiple COVID-19 deployments. With support from WHO, PNG's National Department of Health led EMT coordination efforts in those responses, and recognized the need for similar capabilities to be developed for national response.

Results/Outcomes: To develop the PNG EMT, a focal point was appointed, a national technical working group was formed, and SOPs have been drafted with support from WHO and partners. In consultation with PNG and other Pacific EMTs, WHO is procuring a tailored Pacific EMT cache, including items specifically selected for PNG's diverse geographic and climactic environments. PNG plans to train team members and be ready for self-sufficient national deployments by late 2022.

Conclusion: PNG is strengthening readiness for future emergencies by developing a national EMT capable of rapid response to challenging and austere post-disaster environments.

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