

Defining and Operationalizing Disaster Preparedness of Hospitals: A Systematic Review of the Literature

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Introduction: Societies invest substantial amounts of resources on disaster preparedness of hospitals. However, the concept is not clearly defined or operationalized in the international literature.

Aim: This study seeks to contribute to the alignment of knowledge of disaster preparedness in hospitals based on a systematic review and analysis of definitions and operationalizations.

Methods: A systematic search was conducted in five databases: Scopus, Pubmed, Web of Science, Disaster Information Management Research Centre, and Safetylit. Peer-reviewed articles containing definitions and operationalizations of disaster preparedness in hospitals were included. Articles published in languages other than English, or without available full-text were excluded, as were articles on pre-hospital care.

Results: Of the 39 included publications, 14 defined disaster preparedness in hospitals and 26 operationalized the concept. Although the definitions differed, they also reflected similar elements. Based on an analysis of the operationalizations, 12 different components could be identified that generally were not studied in relation to each other. Moreover, where publications primarily focused on structure and process aspects of disaster preparedness, 4 articles described the preferred outcome.

Discussion: This review points at an absence of consensus on the definition and operationalization of disaster preparedness in hospitals. By combining the elements of the definitions and the components operationalized disaster preparedness could be conceptualized in a more comprehensive and complete way. A framework was developed that can guide future disaster preparedness research.

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Analysis of Disaster Related International Consensus Frameworks 2015-2017: Implications for WADEM

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Introduction: Between 2015 and 2018, a number of influential disaster-related International Consensus Frameworks evolved.

Aim: To locate these Frameworks and identify commonalities, potential interactions, and possible implications for WADEM.

Methods: A targeted literature review and thematic analysis.

Results: The review identified the following Frameworks: Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030; Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda; Paris Climate Change Conference; WADEM Position Statement on Climate Change; World Humanitarian Summit; Core Humanitarian Standards; Sphere Handbook, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response; Habitat111 - the new Urban Agenda; Sphere Guidelines for Urban Disasters; Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities Project; New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants; Dhaka Declaration on Disability and Disaster Risk Management; WHO Emergency Medical Teams and Accreditation; WADEM's Disaster Research and Evaluation Frameworks; ALNAP's Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide; and Evidence Aid's Use of Evidence in the Humanitarian Sector: A Practice Guide.

Discussion: All Frameworks used substantial theoretical and/or evidence-based underpinnings, and evolved from structured processes. One subset had major political and government influences while others reflected applied, professional influences. A number of the Frameworks further evolved during 2017-18, providing indicators, international reporting, and interpretative guidelines. Common themes included a desire to improve the quantum and quality of science, evidence-based and accountability, use of Resilience as a conceptual framework, commonalities, and interactions between the new generation humanitarian, development concepts, and traditional disaster concepts, particularly in the global influence of climate change and greater urbanization. Other themes included new paradigms (e.g. international influence of Rockefeller's Acute Shocks), Chronic Stressors concept, and the anchoring theme of the Sustainable Development Goals and capacity building. The ALNAP, Rockefeller, Sphere, and WADEM Evidence Aid Frameworks provide useful guidelines on how the objectives of these International Consensus Frameworks may be achieved and measured. All Frameworks have implications for the future direction of WADEM.

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