

FREE PAPER SESSIONS**Session 1A: Preparedness**

Chairpersons:

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Do You Know, What Your Actual Preparedness Is?*Matti A.K. Mattila*

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Socrates said, "Gnothi se auton!" ("You must know yourself!"). It is important to know your own technical skills and tactical preparedness for an occasional accident or disaster. A reliable measure of your knowledge concerning your own personal capabilities is most essential for eventual members or leaders of medical rescue groups. Actually, it is a useful feature for everyone.

Our daily clinical work can guarantee and control our technical skills that would be needed in field traumatology, but practice in tactical operations remains difficult to obtain. Almost every one of us only has an untested imagination of his own ego in making sharp, priority decisions and for adaptation to scarce resources. Instead of depending only upon our imagination, we should have some proof of our level of preparedness.

The use of computer-aided simulations provides a promising opportunity for training in logical decision-making for this process. A tactical accident simulation programme (Matimed) has been in use for five years. According to our experience, most physicians and nurses do not master tactics at the expected level. In a multiple casualty situation, you must make a primary survey through all victims before you can start therapeutic procedures and initiate transportation in a correct priority order. In a simulated situation, most trainees stop, however, at the first encountered victim and nearly forget others. In a computer-aided simulation, efforts often are wasted performing non-essential activities without any evidence of an appropriate priority thinking.

In a simulated accident situation, the tactical preparedness of most physicians does not reach the level generally assumed.

We conclude that we live in misleading imaginations of tactical competence. The individual's tactical qualification can be tested easily by applying a simple computer simulation, and also may be improved by frequent training in making tactical decisions challenged by the programme. The significance of priority decisions on victims' outcomes can be demonstrated. The challenge by repetitive training can be maintained by creating a comprehensive library of various simulated multiple casualty situations.

Key Words: computer simulation; decisions; interactive training; preparedness; tactical preparedness; triage

Establishing Disaster Preparedness in a Developing Country*Dr. Whaid Ali Alkharusi, FRCS*

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Until 1970, the Sultanate of Oman had no modern facilities to support basic health care needs, let alone face a health disaster. At that time, only one basic missionary hospital, located in Muscat, covered the entire country. The Sultanate of Oman is a nation with a coast line of some 1,600 km (976 miles) and a geography composed of many different terrain.

In last 21 years, the Sultanate of Oman has taken its place as a fully modern state with adequate facilities in all parameters to combat the effects of disasters. These facilities need to be coordinated to be effective. Other than for a limited period during the early 1970s in the Southern Region, the Sultanate of Oman has not faced a disaster of any consequence, natural or otherwise, during the last 70 years. This long period of security makes onerous the task to alert the community and its leaders aware of the disastrous and deleterious effects of disasters.

This paper discusses:

- 1) The planning for disaster preparedness and management in the Sultanate of Oman, along with the development of the associated supporting services, such as Emergency Medical Services;
- 2) The difficulties faced in convincing those responsible, regarding the importance of the planning process, especially due to the lack of experience in local disaster situations. This is increasingly complicated as senior levels of management are faced with prioritizing disaster management with the other needs of a developing country; and
- 3) The methods used to overcome local and religious beliefs also will be described. An initial effort was made in March of 1996 with the assistance of the international community, but this type of activity needs to have a high priority in order to sustain its momentum.

This paper also will discuss the role played by the Sultanate of Oman in the enhancement of disaster preparedness in the region.

Key Words: disaster management; disaster preparedness; Oman; prioritization

How to Improve International Disaster Relief Activities*Yasufumi Asai; Kouji Sakane; Hidetomi Ooi; Aiichirou Yamamoto; Yasuhiro Yamamoto; Muneo Ohta; Tomoo Hirakawa; Tutomu Korenaga; *Tomohide Atumi**

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Purpose: The purpose of this study was to collect information on the systems of international disaster relief activities used by Norway, Germany, and Switzerland, and to exchange views with the people from the governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Norwegian Emergency Preparedness System: Relief