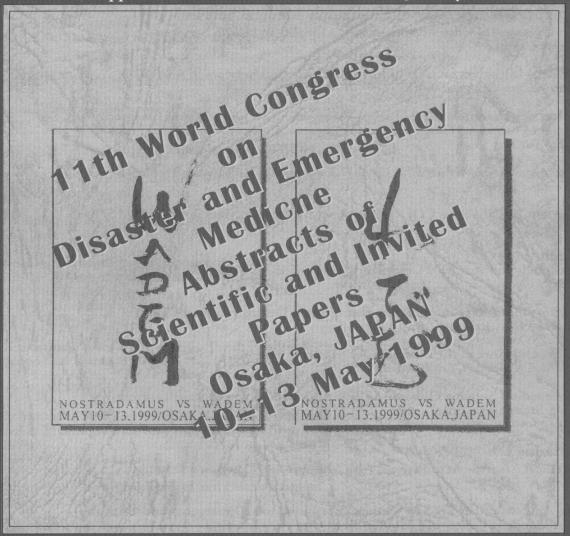
PREHOSPITAL and DISASTER MEDICINE

Médecine Pré-Hospitalière et Médecine de Catastrophe Medicina Prehospitalária y de Catástrofes

> 病院にかかる前の処置と 災害医療

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11th World Congress of the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine

10 - 13 May, 1999 Osaka, Japan

Dear Colleagues:

It is with great pride and pleasure that I present this book of scientific abstracts to you in anticipation of the 11th World Congress of the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine. Gathered in preparation for the May 10-13 Congress, this special supplementary issue of the WADEM journal *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* (PDM) contains over 200 papers on the most pressing issues in Disaster and Emergency Medicine today. Thanks to the great efforts of all contributors and the Editorial Board of PDM, headed by Dr. Marvin L. Birnbaum, we have here a collection of what I am convinced will inspire great discussion at WADEM-11, and consequent worldwide development in the area of Disaster and Emergency Medicine for the 21 century.

Muneo Ohta Congress Chairman WADEM-11th Word Congress

Our Responsibilities in the Un-Natural Disasters

When we last gathered at the 10th World Congress on Emergency and Disaster Medicine in our founding city of Mainz, I reflected upon the many individuals who comprise the membership of the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM), and attempted to outline our mission in Disaster Medicine. I found a great many talented, highly committed physicians, nurses, and paramedics, continuously striving to improve the nature of our responses to emergencies and disasters at all levels, while at the same time, working diligently to render themselves somewhat obsolete through education, prevention, and mitigation efforts that might reduce the impact of disasters on human populations.

In the past 25 years, natural disasters have caused an average of nearly 130,000 deaths every year; the great bulk of these have been in poorer, developing countries. The forces of nature cannot be stopped, but the adverse impact of natural hazards on populations can be mitigated, and, in some cases, completely prevented. We must vigorously address the underlying reasons for these recurrent humanitarian crises through planning and development, while at the same time taking steps to ensure a consistent level of disaster medical response.

However, there is one form of humanitarian public health crisis that we do have the absolute capability to prevent — WAR. We can, and we must continue to gaze into the mirror of humanity and question honestly, what it is that we see reflected back to us. How contradictory it is that we take such collective pride in the global accomplishments of, for example, the marvelous technological innovations that bring us ever so much closer together as a world community, while at the same time, and in virtually the same breath, we remain powerless to prevent the seemingly endless stream of armed conflicts that, like some subhuman serpentine menace, slithers its way from nation to nation, completely insensitive to the terrible mass population health consequences that follow in its trail. Wars ostensibly are fought between defined military combatants, but the real story always is the same: the unarmed, civilian population is left without shelter, food, sanitation, safe water, or a health-care infrastructure. Because war decimates the structure, services, and norms of the affected society, the civilian population suffers extraordinary losses. Families are fractured, communities destroyed, basic survival needs go unmet, and lifelines necessary to maintain the well-being of the population become targets of combat.

We cannot harness the power of nature; we only can attempt to mitigate its adverse consequences. However, we do have the potential to control wholesale violence between ourselves. As we approach a new era, let us work for the day when the deliberations of these World Congresses will focus solely on the health consequences of natural disasters, because we will have grown beyond the senselessness of attempting to solve our political differences with weapons rather than with our species-specific gifts of language and reason.

Keywords: civilians; conflict; Disaster Medicine; education; hazards; health; infrastructure; military; mitigation; prevention; technology; war; World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM)

Presidential Address Steven J. Rottman, MD, FACEP President, World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM)