

# PREHOSPITAL and DISASTER MEDICINE

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

病院にかかる前の処置と  
災害医療

Volume 13, Number 2-4

April-December 1998

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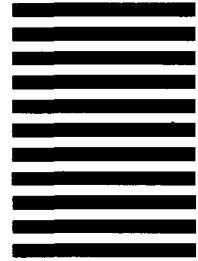
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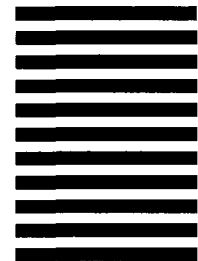


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# Table of Contents

---

## Editor's Corner

- Coming together—The Time Is Now!** ..... 9  
*Marvin L. Birnbaum, MD, PhD*
- Editor's Notes** ..... 11

## Editorials

- Anti-Personnel Landmine: The Next Bold Step...** ..... 12  
*Ron Stewart*

## Original Research

- Mortality and Morbidity Among Rwandan Refugees Repatriated from Zaire, November, 1996** ..... 17  
*Nicholas Banatvala, MFPHM; Alison J. Roger, MFPHM; Ailsa Denny, SRN; John P. Howarth, MRCGP*
- Triage, Transportation, and Destination Decisions by Out-of-Hospital Emergency Care Providers** ..... 22  
*Anthony J. Billittier IV, MD, FACEP; E. Brooke Lerner, MS, EMT-P; Ronald M. Moscato, MD, FACEP; Gregory Young, MD, FACEP, FCCP*
- Perceived Preparedness for a Mass Casualty Disaster in the United States: A Survey** ..... 28  
*Jeffery Glick; Marvin L. Birnbaum, MD, PhD*
- Prehospital Treatment of Severe Hypoglycaemia: A Comparison of Intramuscular Glucagon and Intravenous Glucose** ..... 44  
*Søren Carstens MD, Michael Sprehn MD*
- Predicting Survival From Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest** ..... 51  
*Daniel J. Lindholm, NREMT-P; Jack P. Campbell, MD, FACEP*

## Special Report

- The Role of Tactical Emergency Medical Support in Hostage and Crisis Negotiations** ..... 55  
*James L. Greenstone, EdD, JD, ABECI, DABPS*
- Risk Factors, Prevention, and Prophylaxis of Dog Bites for Disaster Response Personnel in the United States** ..... 58  
*Sebastian E. Heath, VetMB, MPVM; Bruno B. Chomel DVM, PhD*

Continued



## Continuing Education

### Fredrick C. Cuny Memorial Series

**Principles of Disaster Management: Lesson 2: Program Planning** .....63

*Fred C. Cuny*

**Errata** .....80

**Guidelines for Authors** .....81

**Book Review** .....82

**Guidelines for Advertisers** .....4

## Supplements

**iii NordiC Congress of Emergency and Disaster Medicine - Abstracts of Invited and Scientific**

**Papers** .....83

**First Pan American Congress of Emergency and Disaster Medicine - Abstracts** .....110

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### **The Lessons Learned from the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Quake: The Role Of Hospitals Surrounding Affected Area-**

Tatsuro Kai, MD; Muneo Ohta, MD

Osaka Prefectural Senri Critical Care Medical Center. Suita City, Osaka, JAPAN 565-0862.

**Introduction:** At 05:46h on 17 January, 1995, the worst earthquake in postwar-Japan occurred in Kobe area. The quake killed more than 6,000, injured approximately 36,000, and left 320,000 persons homeless. There were 593 hospitals in Osaka prefecture, only 30 km east of Kobe, and 87% of those hospitals functioned normally at the time of the quake.

**Purpose:** To investigate disaster medical services to the affected area from non-affected Osaka area.

**Methods:** Questionnaires were constructed to elicit information from hospital administrators in Osaka prefecture about their impressions about the medical relief activities provided for the affected area and patients one month after the earthquake. Questionnaires were mailed to each of the 593 hospitals.

**Results:** A total of 330 surveys were completed and returned (recovery rate = 55%). 23% of hospitals dispatched medical teams to the affected area within one month, but only 4 hospitals could have done so within the first 48 hours of the event due to lack of detailed information and requests from the affected area. There were a total of 300 vacant beds available for critical patients and 500 for severe patients at the hospitals in Osaka during the first day of the disaster. Nevertheless, 15 critical and 54 severe patients were admitted to hospitals in Osaka during the first day due to the lack of information and destruction of ground access routes.

**Conclusion:** Hospitals in Osaka did not function well as surrounding hospitals of the disaster site. We will discuss the factors that hindered the medical activity in Osaka area.

**Key words:** available beds; disaster; earthquake; Great Hanshin-Awaji Quake (1995); hospital function; hospital role; information systems; medical activities

**[note: Abstracts will be edited for clarity and English by Editorial Staff of PDM]**

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