

Rehabilitation Medicine Society of Australia and New Zealand (RMSANZ), Disaster Rehabilitation-Special Interest Group (DR-SIG): Current Activities and Future Agenda

Fary Khan

The Disaster Rehabilitation- Special Interest Group (DR-SIG) of the RMSANZ contributes to the society's humanitarian agenda to advocate for Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) perspective in minimizing disability, optimizing function and health-related quality of life of disasters survivors (natural and man-made). The DR-SIG collaborates with the Disaster Rehabilitation Committee (DRC) of the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM) on disaster-related disability initiatives. Consistent with RMSANZ goals, the DR-SIG aims to advance the global disaster rehabilitation community of practice to support coordinated response to disasters, to provide education and training resources on rehabilitation disaster management, and to collaborate with the disaster management stakeholders (national and international) to advance global disaster rehabilitation policy and practice; and perform and facilitate disaster rehabilitation research.

The DR-SIG committee members are actively involved in various activities during past and recent disasters, specifically providing care to the disasters victims on the ground; providing guidance consultation through online consultation and remote teleconferencing and collaboration with other national organisations for knowledge sharing and dissemination. The committee members are involved in the WHO Emergency Medical Team (EMT) initiative and assist in development of and/or providing guidance/consultation(s) in preparation of various guidelines and protocols. The DR-SIG is also involved in development of evidence-based practice guidelines and protocols such as: traumatic brain injury (TBI) (published in JISPRM) and complications following TBI in disaster settings (submission in progress); setting up free educational on-line training modules for TBI in disaster settings (in progress). Under auspices of the RMSANZ, the DR-SIG recently completed pilot project: 'Disaster-Preparedness Skill Survey' for rehabilitation professional, which will aid in setting up an RMSANZ dataset to list rehabilitation professionals willing to undergo disaster training and possible deployment to disaster settings (or join an WHO Emergency Medical Team) if requested (report submitted for publication). This tool is now adapted by the ISPRM, which is currently conducting survey of all its members (>4000) from 62 National Societies worldwide. This will further extend to establishment of the Rehabilitation Physician Disaster Training and Deployment Registry for Asia-Pacific Region (complementary process to the WHO), under auspices of the RMSANZ and ISPRM.

Most recently, the DR-SIG members have prepared and proposed a specific comprehensive Disaster Rehabilitation Response plan (DRRP) to the ISPRM, which will enable the ISPRM and the DRC to provide structured leadership and governance role in liaison/coordination with the WHO EMT Initiative and other relevant stakeholders to provide rehabilitation input during future disasters (accepted for publication). The DR-SIG members established Operational Guidelines Working Groups for Rehabilitation for other major injuries in disaster settings (such as musculoskeletal, multiple trauma, burns etc.).

The DR-SIG Rehabilitation Flying Faculty (comprising interdisciplinary rehabilitation professionals), have visited various LMICs as independent experts to run organized intensive rehabilitation educational workshops and capacity building programs (in countries such as Mongolia,

Nigeria, Morocco, Pakistan, Thailand, Mongolia, Bangladesh). It has hosted symposium, workshops and special session of disaster rehabilitation at the RMSANZ annual meetings and also participated in ISPRM world congresses In Kobe 2019, World Congress of Neurorehabilitation, Asia-Oceania Conference of Physical & Rehabilitation Medicine Nanjing 2019; and Annual Scientific Meeting of the national congresses of various countries (including Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Brunei (2018-20)). In these meetings the committee members conducted various workshops for early researchers and provided expert opinion on recommendations for future research in injury and physical rehabilitation for the humanitarian catastrophes. The SIG members collaborated on original scientific research resulting in presentations in various conferences/meetings in 2018-19 and publications of over 10 manuscripts in various academic journals (please see below).

The current developments in disaster rehabilitation area and the DR-SIG involvement could be regarded as the much-needed steps in the right direction. It has a significant role to play in future disaster management process to facilitate coordination among major rehabilitation providers in Australia and elsewhere, to deliver timely and effective rehabilitative care to survivors. However, it acknowledges the many challenges ahead.

Related publication form DR-SIG members (2017- August 2019):

- Khan F, Amatya B, Lee SY, Vasudevan V. Rehabilitation in disaster relief. *Phys Med Rehabil Clin N Am* 2019 (in press) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmr.2019.06.001>
- Lee SY, Amatya B, Judson R, Truesdale M, Reinhardt JD, Uddin T, et al. Applicability of traumatic brain injury rehabilitation interventions in natural disaster settings. *Brain Inj* 2019; 33: 1293-1298.
- Amatya B, Vasudevan V, Zhang N, et al. Emergency medical team: minimum technical standards and recommendations for traumatic brain injury specialist rehabilitation teams. *J Int Soc Phys Rehabil Med* 2018;1:72-94.
- Khan F and Amatya B. Rehabilitation medicine critical to disaster relief. 2016. <https://www.doctorportal.com.au/mjainsight/2016/33/rehabilitation-medicine-critical-to-disaster-relief/>.
- Khan F, Amatya B, De Groot W, et al. Capacity-building in clinical skills of rehabilitation workforce in low- and middle-income countries. *J Rehabil Med* 2018;50:472–479.
- Khan F, Amatya B, Avirmed B, Yi YK, Shirmen B, Abbott G, et al. World Health Organization Global Disability Action Plan: the Mongolian perspective. *J Rehabil Med* 2018; 50: 358–366.
- Khan F, Owolabi MO, Amatya B, Hamzat TK, Ogunniyi A, Oshinowo H, et al. Challenges and barriers for implementation of the World Health Organization Global Disability Action Plan in low- and middle- income countries. *J Rehabil Med* 2018; 50: 367-376.
- Amatya B, Galea M, Li J, Khan F. Medical rehabilitation in disaster relief: towards a new perspective. *J Rehabil Med* 2017.
- Khan F, Amatya B, Sayed TM, Butt AW, Jamil K, Iqbal W, et al. World Health Organisation Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Challenges and perspectives for physical medicine and rehabilitation in Pakistan. *J Rehabil Med* 2017; 49: 10-21.