

## **Hospital disaster response in impacts of climate change**

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It is evident that the impacts of global warming and climate change on our environment, society, development and health is adversely growing at a slow pace if we look back in terms of disease scenarios and statistics in countries for at least 50 years back or so from now. Those impacts are even appearing more prominently during last 25 years with the cases of emerging and re-emerging diseases despite so many efforts they have been made by the countries in health sector and with increasing their health expenditures and capacities. Increasing communicable and non-communicable disease burdens in society put direct pressures in existing facilities for health services demanding treatments for acute and chronic diseases in prevalence. Those demands fluctuate significantly on the higher side in case of disasters triggered by climate change such as those of frequent cases of extreme weather conditions, heavy rainfall, floods, landslides, draughts, and environmental degradations from air pollution, water pollution and soil contamination.

Hospitals or health care centres need to understand better - the possible increase in disease loads in community that could be attributable to climate change effects. Climate change surveillance in place and allocation of disease burdens to its effects, therefore, would be very important to develop capacities of hospitals for efficient health care services; or in other words to increase hospitals' resilience to cope with increasing treatment and care needed for patients suffering from disasters enacted upon with the triggering effects of climate change has become an important aspect. Diarrhoeal diseases, malnutrition, cardiovascular diseases, and vector-borne diseases due to movement and change in activity of disease vectors needs to be routinely monitored to assist the climate change surveillance and to promote strengthening of hospitals and health care centres.

As envisaged by WHO, following requirements are essential to reorient hospitals or health care centres in a way to deal adequately with the increasing disease burdens in the community that are more or less attributable to the disasters including those from climate change effects:

- Develop and implement national policies and programmes to make health facilities safe in emergencies.
- Select a safe site for the health facility
- Design and construct safe health facilities
- Assess the safety of existing health facilities
- Protect health workers, equipment, medicines and supplies
- Ensure that health facilities receive essential services
- Develop partnerships between health facilities and the community
- Develop an emergency risk management programme for individual health facilities
- Develop an emergency response plan for each health facility
- Test and update response plans with drills and exercises
- Train the health workers to respond to emergencies
- Evaluate and learn lessons from past emergencies and disasters