Building the ISRPM disaster acute rehabilitation team program

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Program/Project Purpose: Rehabilitation response following a natural disaster has been progressively documented as an essential strategy for recovery and relief. In order to respond quickly, rehabilitation professionals, policy makers, relief volunteers and health officials need adequate training. The International Society for Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine arranged a directive to improve rehabilitation after disasters by creating a training program built off of the first hand documentation of past disasters around the world.

Structure/Method/Design: After putting together a preliminary online framework for the Disaster Acute Rehabilitation Team curriculum, three University of Michigan students travelled to China, Chile and Taiwan individually to conduct interviews with disaster victims, doctors, health officials, nurses, volunteers and hospital administration in post-disaster areas to assess their personal post-disaster rehabilitation experiences. Dozens of interviews were conducted and over 20 hours of video and over 2,000 photographs were collected. The student/physician team consolidated this information in the form of training videos for rehabilitation physicians, online quizzes, tutorials, disaster photography, and realistic disaster scenarios. We organized all of this information into a framework for initial trials as a PowerPoint presentation.

Outcomes & Evaluation: The framework for the core curriculum consists of 3 modules: a module for training rehabilitation professionals who will respond immediately to a natural disaster, another module for training rehabilitation professionals who will be team leaders and a third for rehabilitation professionals who will coordinate with national emergency planning organizations and NGO’s. All of the modules have been successfully completed and edited by international disaster experts from the International Society for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. The next step consists of making the modules internet friendly and inviting physicians to become trained in disaster rehabilitation.

Going Forward: It is imperative that the rehabilitation response be rapid and efficient to improve survival rate following natural disaster. The DART curriculum provides a method for rehabilitation professionals who are involved in disaster work to plan and respond more effectively. The first-hand experience gained through interviews with rehabilitation professionals and tours of the disaster sites allowed for the production of a core curriculum and the preemptive planning for acute rehabilitation response during a natural disaster. The next challenges include finalizing our curriculum into website format and recruiting rehabilitation physicians from around the world to become trained in Natural Disaster Response.

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Violence towards Tanzanians with albinism: A CHW program to improve awareness and prevent discrimination

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Program/Project Purpose: People with albinism (PWAs) in Tanzania face overwhelming health and social challenges including high susceptibility to skin cancer and widespread discrimination. Tanzanians with albinism have also become targets of violent outbreaks. This violence is fostered by superstitions including