

New training program enhances disaster preparedness for healthcare personnel

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Presenter answers questions from Prof. David Alexander (UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction). Credit: Shuji Seto

A new comprehensive course incorporating an interdisciplinary approach to disaster preparedness shows promise for better equipping health professionals in responding to disasters.

Medical staff and researchers from Tohoku University and Fukushima Medical University organized the program. The two universities are well

equipped in [disaster response](#) and preparedness given their regions were at the epicenter of the deadly 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake.

Their findings were published in the *Journal of Disaster Research*.

"From the experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake, we have learned that disaster medical personnel are required to play the role of conductors in site selection dispatching and on-site activities," said Hiroyuki Sasaki at the International Research Institute of Disaster Science, and Tadashi Ishii at the Education and Support for Regional Medicine, Tohoku University Hospital. "Healthcare managers need broad operational experiences to enable them to prepare for and respond to catastrophes. This ranges from psychological first aid, public health intervention, disaster law, and crisis communications."

Personnel with such skills are known as conductor-type disaster healthcare management.

Researchers conducted the training at the second World Bosai Forum taking place in 2019. Established in 2017, this bi-annual forum brings together international experts in the field of disaster risk reduction and management for a series of lectures and panel discussions.

The training incorporated a wide range of subjects such as data analysis, cultural revitalization in the wake of [disasters](#), and post-disaster psychological and physical well-being.

Junko Okuyama and other members of the Designated National University Core Research Cluster of Disaster Science analyzed the self-reported questionnaires distributed to participants after the session. They found that awareness of collaboration among multiple fields and the importance of capturing disaster data had a lasting impact on the participants.

"The current COVID-19 pandemic illustrates how quickly the healthcare sector can be overwhelmed," added Okuyama. "Our core competency based training course demonstrates [disaster preparedness](#) and response require a multifaceted approach that incorporates interdisciplinary research."

More information: Junko Okuyama et al. WBF-2019 Core Research Cluster of Disaster Science Planning Session as Disaster Preparedness: Participation in a Training Program for Conductor-Type Disaster Healthcare Personnel, *Journal of Disaster Research* (2020). [DOI: 10.20965/jdr.2020.p0900](#)

Provided by Tohoku University

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