

Abstract

Background: Food, clothing, housing and medical care are basic needs of a human being and thus provision of them in adequate manner is the aim of the humanitarian response in disaster situations. The Humanitarian Charter and the International Human Rights law provides the legal backdrop to maintain minimal standards in the humanitarian response. Today the Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management cluster co-lead by the UNHCR and IOM handles the camps in disaster situations worldwide. In Sri Lanka the camp management is done by multidisciplinary team approach where multiple stakeholders lead by the government will be handling the camp management during disaster situations in which the Grama Niladhari is the grass root level government official.

Objectives: To assess knowledge and practices regarding camp management in disaster situations among Gramaniladhari in Kalutara district.

Methodology: A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted in Kalutara district including Grama Niladhari working in the Kalutara district who has working experience of more than six months. Six divisional secretary areas were selected randomly to achieve the required sample size. There were 418 Grama Niladhari in the selected divisional secretary areas. Self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection and chi square test was performed to compare variables. Ethical clearance was obtained from the ethics review committee of the National Hospital

Sri Lanka. Overall knowledge and practices scores were calculated and categorized in to “Good” and “Poor” using the 25th percentile as the cut off value.

Results: Number of participants were 406 [response rate 97.12%] and the sample consisted of more females [58.6%] than males [41.6]. Average income was Rs.30199.00 [SD=6793.19] and 84% of the participants had not received any training on camp management. Only 30.5% had been engaged in camp management during their working years and 57.6% were not familiar with the computer based reporting formats. In assessment of the knowledge **more than 35% of GNs had poor overall knowledge in camp management and in assessment of overall practices more than 25% of the GNs had poor practices in camp management.**

Conclusions and Recommendations: Awareness programs aiming to improve the knowledge will be beneficial and close inspection of real situations of camp management during disaster situations is recommended to ensure standard camp management procedures as the practices was poor among 25.9% of GNs. Inclusion of experienced GNs (as a support team to the area GNs) in management of camps in real situations to share their knowledge with the younger generation will be beneficial to reduce pitfalls in camp management during disaster situations. The study identified the lack of training in camp management and lack of adaptation of the new technology into the scheme of work of GNs which emphasize the need of training on camp management as well as the need of a forum to share knowledge of the people who had training and experience in camp management.