



Disasters and renal services-A single center experience at Muhimbili National Hospital

Jaqueline Shoo-MD

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INTRODUCTION

The impact of natural disasters is particularly challenging to healthcare, especially in low-resourced settings where with limited health budgets, governments have invested enormous funds in establishing special services. In October 2020, we encountered heavy rains causing flooding in different areas. Currently, we lack guidelines for emergency preparedness for dialysis facilities in our settings. We narrate our dialysis center's experience with flooding during this period.

METHODOLOGY

We retrospectively collected information through physical and phone conversations with hemodialysis unit heads of unit, bioengineers, dialysis nurses, and doctors, as well as from dialysis unit reports on the previous flooding event.

RESULTS

The 42-bed dialysis unit is located on the basement floor of the 4-storey building of the children's hospital, with more than 300 patients and performing 100 hemodialysis sessions daily. On event day, the dialysis unit suddenly flooded with water in all dialysis rooms, waiting areas, stores, consultation and procedure rooms. Patients were safely evacuated from the unit and sent for dialysis in another dialysis unit. Major equipment breakdown occurred including 42 dialysis machines and their electrical controlled chairs and 6 of the 8 department computers hence dialysis services were shut down. Ten (10) days elapsed between renovation, repair, replacement of equipment and reopening. On reopening 50% of patients did not return to our unit. The number of dialysis sessions dropped by 20% in that quarter compared to the same quarter in the previous year resulting in a loss of revenue generation for the hospital. The supplier's company support did repair of dialysis machines and chairs. The water drainage system was reconstructed.

CONCLUSION

There is a need to place disaster mitigating strategies in our facilities to avoid disruption of services potential of risking patients' lives. The impact of such disasters also creates a potential financial burden to the facility.