Disaster Preparedness Initiative for Dementia

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Pakistan Earthquake 2005

Date: 08 Oct 2005

Magnitude: 7.6

Death Toll: Over 100,000

Injured: Over 200,000

Homeless: 3.5 M
Pakistan Earthquake 2005

Worked as a Volunteer at a Tent Village, which was catering for 3000 people for a period of six months.
The neglect of the elderly was common
Pakistan suffered the worst possible floods in its history

More than 20 million people were displaced
Plight of PWD

Seeing the vulnerability of the old and sick in these two major disasters in which I was personally working as a volunteer. I started thinking about PWD.

- They were invisible and voiceless
- They were neglected in everyway e.g their diet, medicines, personal hygiene
- No one was caring for them as they did not understand their problem
Helping PWD

• A local campaign to help PWD was initiated

• An appeal was sent to ADI for support

• Member countries and individuals came forward to help

• A special camp for helping PWD was established in the affected area
Pakistan Massive Floods 2010

- The PWD were identified, rescued and brought to camps
- They were given food rations, beddings, shelter and required medicines.
The is the time that I realized that the World is rapidly changing as everyday it is being challenged by:

1. Natural Disasters

2. Manmade Disaster
The frequency of extreme weather events is increasing through the warming and moistening of the atmosphere.

Hot days are becoming even hotter and more frequent, and both drought and heavy rain and snow will continue to occur more often. Because hurricanes draw their strength from the heat of water on the ocean's surface, a warmer climate means hurricanes are getting stronger.

National Center for Science Education
The Frequency of mega storms, floods and heatwaves have gone up considerably.
Melting polar ice caps – The consequences of climate change go far beyond warming temperatures, which scientists say are melting the polar ice caps and raising sea levels.
Frequency of Earthquakes have also increased in the last two decades
Hurricane Katrina

2005

USA

Death Toll: 1,836

Missing: 705

More than half of these victims were senior citizens
Tsunami

Magnitude: 9.0
Death Toll: 280,000
Injured: NA
Homeless: 1.74 M

2004
14 Countries
Earthquake- Tsunami  2011   Japan

Magnitude:  9.1
Death Toll:  Over 22000   Missing: 2500
Earthquake Turkey 2011

Magnitude: 7.2
Death Toll: 600  Injured: 4152
Homeless: 60000
Its not only the climate change and natural disasters affecting people globally, its man made disasters like wars, which are also playing their destructive role.
Wars are playing havoc with the lives of people. In case they survive death or disease, they are vulnerable to food insecurity, psychological trauma and hopelessness and forced to migrate to other countries.

Survival of the fittest is the call of the day and the PWD are often not only neglected but left behind to fend for themselves in alien camps.
War in Syria

The war in Syria has destroyed the Country and millions have been forced to migrate.
Migration has its own hazards and the old people suffer the most, because of their physical limitations and vulnerability.
Lessons Learnt

The elderly in general and PWD specifically are often affected disproportionately by disasters as there is a greater likelihood that they will have physical limitations, a decline in cognitive function and confusion about their environment.

This is further complicated by limited financial resources, thus making them more vulnerable.
Lessons Learnt

For PWD, the situation gets even worse as in most cases they require specialized care and often there is no one to care for them during disasters.
Changes in surroundings and routines can be unsettling, as can the heightened activity, turmoil in the overall environment and at times losing a dear one is extremely disturbing for PWD.
The experience in Pakistan and elsewhere during such disaster situations has shown that PWD suffer worst as they are not on the radar for the relief work although they are one of the most vulnerable groups in such situations.
ADI Initiative

Disaster Preparedness Initiative for Dementia

Call-to-Action
A taskforce comprising of ADI members was established to develop these guidelines:

- Pakistan
- Japan
- Indonesia
- Taiwan
- China
The purpose of this initiative is provide guidance to national Alzheimer’s associations, NGOs, government and other stakeholders to provide much needed care to PWD during emergencies and disasters.
Stakeholders

The taskforce scope of work is to provide a framework of action for stakeholders such as ADI, Helpage International, Redcross/Red Crescent, GADAA and WHO to work collaboratively towards providing treatment and care during emergencies at all levels.

• Local Level
• National Level
• International Level
Important issues which should be considered while developing the guidelines:

1. Registry
2. Risk Assessment
3. Areas of Interventions
Registry

- The first and the foremost step is to identify & find PWD during emergencies and Register them.
- This would be the most difficult part of the exercise and maximum help would be required from all stakeholders, especially the relief agencies.
Risk Assessment

A proper assessment of the PWD affected by the disaster situations should be made.

- Living on their own
- Living at home/camp with carers
- Living in a residential setting such as a nursing home.
Risk Assessment

Staging of their condition:

• Can they independently look after their basic needs e.g. eating, mobility, personal hygiene, medical issues, etc.

• Do they need a carer for looking after their basic needs.

• Do they need specialized care e.g. N.G. tube, Diapers, constant nursing, etc.
Areas of Intervention

After doing the risk assessment, interventions are needed in these four areas:

• Shelter & Basic needs
• Medical care
• Psychosocial support
• Financial help
Guidelines for Carers and HCP

- Proper care guidelines are needed to be developed - on how to care for the PWD at:
  - Home / Camp
  - How the community could assist in providing care
  - Medical care in hospitals should be provided
Training

- Training of Carers on how to deal with PWD in cases of disasters
- Training of Health Care Personals on special needs of PWD in disasters
- Training of rescue staff and volunteers on identifying and referring the PWD
- Community orientation on Dementia and how to help PWD in the community during disasters
Keeping in view the points, which have been highlighted in my presentation, a lot of deliberation is still required before final formulation of the guidelines mature.
HOPE FOR THE FUTURE
THANK YOU