

Seeking Factors Associated to Effective Disaster Preparedness

Strategies at The University of Tokyo Hospital

by

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Abstract

Background: Japan is a country with a high natural disaster frequency. The University of Tokyo Hospital is one of the disaster base hospitals located in the capital city of Tokyo. Hence, developing effective disaster preparedness strategies and strengthening disaster response capacity of The University of Tokyo Hospital is important. To achieve that, understanding the factors associated with disaster response of the hospital staff is crucial. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors associated with staff behavior toward disaster response.

Methods: Two different surveys were conducted, a paper-based questionnaire for the sections (i.e., hospital departments) and an online-based questionnaire for the individuals (i.e., hospital staff). In the paper-based questionnaire, 18 sections that are considered important to decide the hospital functions during a disaster were recruited. In the online-based questionnaire, the hospital staff also recruited staff employed by external partners for voluntary participation. Each questionnaire was developed based on validated questionnaires. Descriptive analyses were conducted on these surveys.

Results: Overall, 17 sections responded to the survey, where 16 out of 28 question items were prepared by more than 70% of the sections. There was no significant association between degree of preparedness and the section's work contents. Overall, 338 staff responded to the survey for individuals. The proportion of each profession among respondents was different from what it actually is at The University of Tokyo Hospital. Strong trends were observed in many items related to behavior and knowledge of local conditions and disaster response in hospitals. The majority of participants had basic

knowledge about disasters. Some background factors, such as age and profession, had significant associations with the respondents' behavior and knowledge.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that some factors in sections and individuals may influence the behavior of staff toward disaster response in the hospital. Some of them require changing measures at the organizational level. To fulfil the role of The University of Tokyo Hospital in society during a natural disaster, continuous efforts for improvement necessary.

Keywords: Disaster preparedness, BCP, University Hospital, Organizational Culture, Strategy development, Collaboration, Stakeholder engagement, Awareness raising