

World Society of Disaster Nursing Activity Reports



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Public Forum on the Third UN WCDRR in Sendai

Report, March 15, 2015 in Sendai

Public Forum on the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) The 3rd United Nations, World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) was held in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, Japan from March 4 – 18, 2014. Top-level officials from 187 countries attended this convention.

Participants of this event included over 6,500 representatives from the UN, persons from UN organizations and non-governmental organizations, in addition to approximately 140,000 people when associated events were also included in tallying. This made it the largest international convention ever held in Japan (WCDRR, 2015). The WCDRR is a convention held by the UN regarding international disaster management and reduction strategies. The first convention was held in 1994 in Yokohama and the second was held in 2005 in Kobe. The Kobe conference saw the launching of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), which became a 10-year policy for international disaster risk reduction until 2015.

On March 15, a joint symposium was held by the Japan Society of Disaster Nursing together with the World Society of Disaster Nursing (WSDN) and the International Council of Nurses (ICN). Four speeches were given on the theme of “Messages to the Next Generation Lessons Learned from Nurses on Disaster around the World.” There were 95 participants from within and outside of Japan, generating a lively atmosphere at the venue with 100 seats. Participants included nurses, graduate students, university faculty members, local residents, and many aspiring nurses, such as high school and university students.

The first speaker, Dr. Nevio Zagaria, the team leader of Disaster Risk Management for Health in the World Health Organization (WHO) Western Pacific Regional Office, explained tendencies in risks of disaster in Asia, and WHO activities related to health risk management. He emphasized the difficulty of independently understanding “hazard” and “vulnerability” by illustrating the previously widely-used formula, “Disaster Risk=Hazard *Vulnerability/Coping Capacity,” and expressed the necessity for a paradigm shift to disaster risk management (DRM) for all hazards and their exacerbating factors such as urbanization, climate change, and environmental pollution. His talk also included an overall explanation on rules and roles of health risk management activity policies in local communities.

The second speaker, ICN consultant, Ms. Lesley Bell introduced the international organization network and ICN’s disaster nursing competency as ICN activities related to disaster nursing. She stated that since nurses make up the largest group among the groups of medical practitioners and play a crucial part in medical response and coordination in health systems and care during disasters, they can provide more rapid and effective care if they are equipped with basic disaster response competency. She also went over the evaluation and suggestions for the current review of the ICN’s disaster nursing competency framework and expressed the necessity to develop the framework to expand its spectrum for general nurses in the future.

The third speaker, Prof. Hiroko Minami, former chairperson of the Japan Society of Disaster Nursing, reviewed the social background of disasters and course of events from the establishment of the Japan Society of Disaster Nursing before introducing the activities of this society. She reported on the achievements by the society focusing on the increased interest in disasters both in the society and the nursing field over the past 20 years and the increasing membership and expansion of its network. As disasters become more frequent, diverse, and complex in recent years, Dr. Minami pointed out that the society has established the subfield of disaster nursing, while also facing new challenges.

The fourth speaker, Prof. Aiko Yamamoto, chairperson of the WSDN, introduced the WSDN's organizations and activities. The society is pushing forward with international academic exchanges and joint research, and is endeavoring to systematize knowledge and implementation of disaster nursing. Since its establishment in 2008, founding members have engaged in activities with 40 organizations in seven countries, and academic conventions have been held three times. Ms. Yamamoto emphasized the necessity for further expanding the society into the future and proactively engaging in academic activities.

In the general discussion, a consensus by four presenters was first expounded on "the necessity for networking." During disasters, maintaining a rapid, globally effective network and sharing information become important issues. Prof. Yamamoto also suggested the necessity to specify the contents of activities. From the floor, opinions and questions regarding information and transparency required in disaster nursing activities were requested, and Dr. Zagaria spoke about the issue of improving health indices used during non-disaster periods.

At the conclusion of the third WCDRR, the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015–2030" and the "Sendai Declaration" were adopted to continue on from the HFA, which was adopted in 2005.

This forms the action policy for disasters over the next 15 years in the international society. The SFDRR declares in the preamble, "to reduce disaster risk and improve infrastructure to cope with disasters for the 'Build Back Better' reconstruction that is supported by international cooperation, and its commitment to adopt a wider and more human-focused preventive approach." Results anticipated in the next 15 years were "greatly reduced risk and loss associated with human life, livelihood, health, individual/corporate communities, and national economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental resources." To achieve these objectives, it was agreed to "engage in promoting understanding of disaster risk, reinforcing governmental disaster response capability, investment in resilience for reduced disaster risk, and 'Build Back Better'."

Moreover, new target values were specifically outlined: (1) number of deaths; (2) number of disaster-affected individuals; (3) economic loss; (4) loss of important infrastructure; (5) number of countries adopting disaster risk reduction strategies; (6) international cooperation; and (7) improved access to early warnings and disaster risk information. Furthermore, in addition to governments, it also includes the roles of stakeholders in private corporations, civic societies, and the mass media; coordination with academic and scientific research organizations; and cooperation with risk factor/scenario analysis/strategy decision-makers in disaster risk reduction (3rd WCDRR, 2015).

As indicated above, the SFDRR has an extremely high affinity with nursing. The topics discussed in this symposium regarding future research activities are also consistent and suggestive of the crucial role of nurses. In particular, this society must promote research and education that contributes to achieving its goal and accumulating evidence regarding activity plans. The society shall make the contribution to achieve the goal stated in this framework of disaster risk reduction to be evaluated in 15 years and continue to widely communicate information. It is believed that Japan as a nation also has a huge responsibility in this regard as a world leader in disaster risk reduction. Going forward, as the globalization of society continues relentlessly, the cooperation of the International Exchange Committee in supporting the WSDN is requested, so that this society is linked with the world in a coordinated manner and continue to promote international research and networking activities.

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