

TRIAGE PROCEDURES IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

ORGANIZING EMERGENCY CARE WHEN SECONDS MATTER

Dealing with disasters

Disaster can strike anytime and take the form of natural calamities, accidents or public health emergencies. The occurrence of such disasters creates sudden surges in casualties that require quick, organised and skilled medical response. Triage is one of the most critical functions during such emergencies. It is a process that categorises patients based on the severity of their condition and the urgency of treatment required. Nurses play a central and indispensable role in triage procedures, ensuring timely care and maximising survival rates.

First to respond

At the frontline of disaster response, nurses are often the first healthcare professionals to assess victims. They are ideally suited for this as their clinical skills, experience and ability to remain calm under pressure help them make rapid assessments. In triage zones, nurses evaluate vital signs, level of consciousness, visible injuries and overall stability of the patient. Based on their assessment, they assign colour-coded categories such as immediate, delayed, minor, or expectant. This is invaluable as it helps the medical team allocate resources efficiently.

How nurses save the day

Coordination is another area in which nurses make their presence felt, ensuring the smooth flow of patients through different stages of care. Their communication skills come to great use as they relay information to doctors, emergency personnel and support staff. Clear and concise communication can prevent delays and reduce medical errors. Additionally, nurses are trained to provide emotional support to victims and their families, helping maintain order and calmness during high-stress situations.



One of the key strengths nurses bring to triage is adaptability. Disaster settings often involve limited supplies, overcrowding and unpredictable conditions. Nurses use critical thinking to prioritise interventions, improvise with available resources and make swift decisions that can significantly influence outcomes. They can also quickly identify life-threatening conditions such as airway obstruction, severe bleeding or shock, helping save lives.

Added to this, nurses also participate in preparedness and training activities. They are involved in developing triage protocols, conducting mock drills and educating communities about emergency response. This preparedness ensures that when a real disaster strikes, the healthcare system can respond efficiently.

To sum it up, nurses play a vital and multifaceted role in triage procedures during disaster management. Their assessment skills, decision-making abilities, leadership and compassion form the backbone of an effective emergency response system.