

Health problems and community participation issues in the earthquake of 2012, East Azerbaijan Province

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Abstract

Background and Objectives: Earthquake of East Azerbaijan with magnitude of 6.3 to 6.4 on the Richter scale, impressed the cities of Varzeghan, Ahar and Heris on 11 August 2012 which left 306 victims and more than 8000 billion Rials cost, caused irreparable damages. Present study aims to investigate and present an analysis of relief performance and also health, environmental and safety aspects after earthquake.

Material and Methods: Required data were gathered during the early days after earthquake via presence and observation in the affected areas. Besides, opinions of health experts were collected through interviews. The rest of required information was collected from websites and publications.

Results: In the following days after the earthquake, coordination between government offices was at a low level and duties were not clear. Lack of correct statistics of permanent and non-permanent residents of villages caused many problems in the construction of new houses. A significant feature of recent earthquake was the approach of community participation; so that they personally distributed the humanitarian aids to the quake-hit areas instead of delivering aids through governmental offices which had its own advantages and disadvantages. Absence of specific responsible until a week after earthquake for the installation of sanitary toilets was a significant problem in the earthquake areas. Other problems included the difficulties associated with the distribution of tents, solid waste collection, distribution of excessive bottled water and its improper storage, and the disposal of demolition waste in the natural drainages.

Conclusion: The situation after the earthquake indicates that despite the presence of government forces in the earthquake affected areas, there were obvious problems especially in field of sanitary which need an integrated planning for relief after earthquake.

Keywords: Natural disaster, Earthquake, East Azerbaijan, Community Participation, Health

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