

National Disaster Management Guideline on Health Matters

The disaster management in India perceived paradigm shift when Government of India enacted the **Disaster Management Act, 2005** which envisaged the creation of the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)**, headed by the **Prime Minister** as its **chairman**. NDMA consists of a vice chairman and eight members that also include a member for Medical preparedness and response in disaster medicine is looked after by Lt Gen (Dr.) J R Bhardwaj.

Under Section 6 of the Disaster Management Act, (2005), the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is, inter alia, mandated to issue Guidelines for preparing action plans for holistic and co-ordinated management of all disasters. Formulation of these guidelines has involved active participation and contribution of stakeholders that include ministries, departments, institutions, experts. Besides this NDMA is presently responsible for conceptualizing and implementing preparedness, mitigation, community preparedness, and public awareness activities besides also helping in recovery

In this direction disaster medicine has been accorded a high priority and the following guidelines have already been released related to health:

- 1. Guidelines on Medical Preparedness and Mass Casualty Management** were released in the year 2007. This guideline focuses on medical preparedness for capacity building at various levels, specialized health care and laboratory facilities, The response focus on pre hospital care and transportation of the casualties and their management in hospitals. An all hazard approach has been adopted and special emphasis has been given for the management of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) casualties
- 2. Guidelines on Chemical (Industrial) Disasters (2007)** focus on management of industrial disasters in chemical industries. The guidelines stress on preparedness for fail free safety and security issues, preparation of on-site and off-site plans. A coordinated response mechanism between on-site and off-shore managers including the management of casualties arising out of chemical industrial disasters.
- 3. Guidelines on management of Biological disasters (2008)** including bio terrorism deals with the prevention, preparedness, management of major epidemics & pandemics and those occurred by terrorist activities in the form of bio terrorism by the use of biological agents. Special stress is laid on prevention by strengthening Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (IDSP), immunization programmes, and preparedness by upgrading and creating Bio-safety laboratories across the country. A chapter is also dedicated to agro terrorism.
- 4. Guidelines on management of Chemical (Terrorism) disasters (2009)** deals with prevention, preparedness including capacity development and infrastructure required thereof. Stress has been laid on strengthening, creation of national and zonal poison information centres, personal protective

equipments (PPE), decontamination facilities, availability of anti-dots, specialized ambulance for evacuation and management of casualties in earmarked hospitals.

5. The Guidelines on Psycho-social Support and Mental Health Services (PSSMHS) stress on the comprehensive interventions aimed at addressing wide range of psychosocial and mental health problems arising out of disasters. These interventions consist of Psycho-social first aid in the immediate response phase followed by psycho-social support. A well orchestrated referral mechanism for continued support and management has been emphasized. Participation of Community Level Workers, Non Government Organization and role of government agencies has been highlighted. Special attention has been paid to the vulnerable groups of the community. Under the umbrella of National Health Policy (NHP), National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) and District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) the PSSMHS shall be delivered through an integrated manner as a part of general health care and general relief in disasters.

For Details Kindly Refer to NDMA Website www.ndma.gov.in