



**The 1st International Workshop on
MANAGEMENT OF THE DEAD AND THE MISSING IN DISASTERS
(MDM)
24-28 October 2005
Bangkok, Thailand**

BACKGROUND

Following the aftermath of the recent Asian tsunami on December 2004 that claimed thousands of lives, it was reported that there was another second calamity in the making that is the outbreaks of diseases caused by the rotting corpses. The PAHO Disaster Newsletter, Jan 2005 issue stated that "the notion that dead bodies pose an urgent health threat in the aftermath of a disaster is one of several enduring myths about disasters and relief efforts that live on." It quoted that some "International organizations urged that the thousands of bloated corpses littering beaches, streets and makeshift morgues be disposed of quickly to stem the threat of disease," one news agency reported. Other media reports were equally alarming. One quoted a microbiologist saying that "there is a very high risk of epidemics breaking out in all these places. Decaying bodies are bacteria factories. The bodies must be quickly disposed of." And another larger problem was being identified: "mass burials and cremations can make identification of remains all but impossible and they prevent survivors from burying loved ones according to local customs and beliefs. Survivors have a strong psychological need to identify lost loved ones and to grieve for them in customary ways."

These issues indicated above created a great challenge to the health government and authorities especially to the World Health Organization on how to educate the public and enhance the capability of the government authorities responsible in managing the dead and the missing in disasters. The international dimension is a key issue that appeared in its complexity. Managing psychosocial consequences created by the dead and the missing in a worldwide context is one of the major challenges of affected countries. No country had planned for or had the capacity and the capability to manage efficiently this problem.

GOAL

To enhance a multi-sectoral approach to the public health management of the dead and the missing in countries affected by mass-fatality natural disasters and to contribute to create a regional network of experts for international local assistance.

OBJECTIVES

The Workshop will give participants knowledge of:

1. To promote disaster preparedness with respect to public health management of the dead and missing.
2. To discuss the lessons learned after the recent tsunami in South East Asia.
3. To consider the role of inter-sectoral cooperation in the identification and the management of the dead.
4. To identify and to discuss management procedures for dealing with the dead and the missing, especially tourists from abroad, including the relationship between the families and the foreign authorities and representatives in the affected country.

5. To discuss the transmission of communicable diseases in disasters and risks posed by dead bodies, including preventive measures and public information.
6. To identify and to describe the psychosocial impacts in connection with dead bodies
7. To identify and discuss public health, legal and logistics issues.
8. To discuss technical aspects of identification of dead bodies
9. To discuss technical and logistical aspects of handling dead bodies
10. To discuss the psychosocial aspects of the missing and the management of the request from families.
11. To identify and to discuss strategies aimed at preventing and controlling the stress linked to the management of the dead and the identification process (for rescue personnel, experts and medical personnel, and families).
12. To promote national training activities aimed at enhancing the national capacity to manage the dead and the missing in disasters
13. To promote international cooperation between neighbouring countries
14. To promote the creation of an international network of national experts ready to assist affected countries at the request of these countries
15. To offer a platform for future activities aimed at sharing experience, pedagogic material and expertise

SUBJECT AREAS

- Overview of communicable diseases in natural disasters, epidemiological surveillance and disease control
- Public health risks linked to dead bodies from human and non-human origin
- Psychosocial consequences of disasters and psychosocial support activities and programs in disasters
- Cultural and religious aspects
- Identification of victims and of dead bodies, forensic and medico legal work
 - autopsy facilities
 - collection of post mortem and ante mortem data
 - database management for victim information
 - use of the Internet to locate relative
 - methods more appropriate for identifying nationals in countries with a limited forensic capacity – or in rural/isolated areas that can not easily be accessed by outside forensic support
- Removal of bodies and human remains
- Appropriate methods for disposal of the dead
 - burial in a way that facilitates exhumation
 - avoidance of cremation of unidentified bodies
 - guidelines to protect ground water
- Management of the missing and relationship with families
- Public information and relation with the media
- Disaster Preparedness
 - specific training for key individual
 - amendments of disaster response plans etc.
- Co-ordination and inter-sectoral collaboration
- Principles of community risk management
- Community based support programs
- Role of police and army in searching , identifying and handling dead bodies
- International cooperation, including the development of a regional/international network of forensic specialists that can be mobilized following large disasters?

- Relation with away families
 - legal issue and death certification
 - psychosocial support and visit of the area

RESOURCE PERSONS

Public Health and Emergency Management experts from WHO, globally reputed international NGOs and technical agencies, will complement ADPC faculty in conducting the course.

WORKSHOP LANGUAGE

All teaching and course materials are in English. It is essential that participants are fully conversant in English.

PARTICIPANTS

The Workshop will be relevant to senior health professionals such as national and provincial Ministries of Health (MoH) officers, health sector emergency managers, hospital directors, teaching staff from academic institutions, designated WHO programme focal points and other relevant health professionals, other specialized agencies such as the army/police, justice, and NGOs. Ideally, participants should be involved in formulating and/or updating national policies and strategies for emergency health management, or in national training and educational programmes, as part of their normal duties.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS:

1. Senior level public health management officers who are holding director positions and above from the national or provincial level staff from the Ministry of Health (MoH) and other emergency health management units, disaster management and other specialized agencies in the region
2. Should be involved in emergency health management but not limited to doctors
3. Involved in current and future policy formulation
4. At least five years active service

COURSE VENUE

The workshop will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from **26-30 September 2005**. The exact venue will be announced later.

FEE PAYING PARTICIPANTS

The workshop fee is US\$1,200 per participant. This includes the cost of tuition fee, course materials (books, CD ROM, handouts, training kit), hotel accommodation on a single room, daily buffet breakfast and lunch, morning and afternoon break refreshments. **The fee package does not cover the cost of plane fare, dinner and other incidental expenses.**

Participants to the course come from diverse countries under the WHO SEARO, EMRO and WPRO regional countries and from fee-paying organizations. The class is size limited to 30 and ADPC accepts participants on a "first come, first served" basis.

The workshop fee is to be paid in advance by bank transfer to ADPC account or deposited at the time of course registration in cash or cashier's check/bank draft payable to ADPC. Kindly confirm your mode of payment.

COURSE ORGANIZERS

The Workshop is organized by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), the Southeast Asia Regional Office, Eastern Mediterranean Region and Western Pacific Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO-SEARO/EMRP/WPRO).



Asian Disaster Preparedness Center

A regional resource center established in 1986 and located at the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok. ADPC works with governments, NGOs and communities of Asia and the Pacific region to strengthen their capacities in disaster preparedness, mitigation and response through training, technical assistance, information sharing, research and implementation of field level programs.

ADPC's vision is safer communities and sustainable development through disaster reduction

ADPC mission:

To reduce the impact of disasters on communities and countries in Asia and the Pacific by raising awareness, helping to establish and strengthen sustainable institutional mechanisms, enhancing knowledge and skills, and facilitating exchange of information, experience and expertise.



World Health Organization (WHO-EMRO/WPRO/SEARO)

The objective of WHO is the attainment by all people of the highest possible level of health. In order to achieve its objectives, WHO undertake various functions such as acting as the coordinating authority on international health work, providing technical assistance, providing health services and facilities to special groups, and developing international agreements and regulations among others.

WORKSHOP ADMINISTRATION

Public Health in Emergencies (PHE)

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