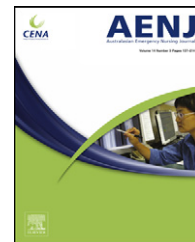




Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

SciVerse ScienceDirect

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/aenj



RESEARCH PAPER

Beyond a clinical role: Nurses were psychosocial supporters, coordinators and problem solvers in the Black Saturday and Victorian bushfires in 2009

Jamie Ranse, RN, FRCNA, BN, GCertClinEpi, GCertClinEd, MCritCarNurs^{a,b,*}
Shane Lenson, RN, FRCNA, BN, MPH, MSN(NursPrac)^{b,c}

^a Faculty of Health, University of Canberra, Australia

^b Disaster Research Centre, Flinders University, South Australia, Australia

^c Australian Catholic University, Canberra, Australia

Received 26 December 2011; received in revised form 15 March 2012; accepted 16 May 2012

KEYWORDS

Nurses;
Nurse's role;
Health resources;
Psychosocial factors;
Disasters;
Bushfire

Summary

Aim: This research explores the roles of nurses that participated in the Black Saturday and Victorian bushfires in February 2009, including aspects that influence nurses' roles, such as prior education, training and availability of resources.

Background: It is acknowledged that nurses play an important role in disaster response and recovery. However, our understanding of nurses' roles is superficial and commonly based on descriptions of events in which specifics relating to the nurses' roles are embedded within other topics or issues. Similarly, aspects that support nurses in the disaster environment, including previous experience, education and the provision of resources, are not well understood.

Method: Single, semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with 11 volunteer nursing members of St John Ambulance Australia. These interviews were electronically recorded, transcribed verbatim and thematically analysed using a well-recognised human science approach.

Findings: The thematic analysis identified two broad themes: being prepared and having an expansive role. Participants indicated that they were educationally prepared and had adequate clinical experience. They outlined that they took many resources with them; however, they were used very little, as their role consisted of minimal clinical care. Additionally, nurses performed roles including a psychosocial supporter, a coordinator of care and resources, and problem solvers.

Conclusions: The nurses' role in providing health care during and/or following a disaster is more than a clinical care role. This understanding should be applied to the development of education programs, competencies and policies, with a particular focus on contextualising

* Corresponding author at: Faculty of Health, University of Canberra, Australia.
E-mail address: jamie@jamieranse.com (J. Ranse).

the education to the realities of possible disastrous scenarios that incorporates elements of coordination, problem solving and psychosocial care within a national framework. Additionally, this awareness education should be used to inform nurses about the realities of working in disaster environments.

© 2012 College of Emergency Nursing Australasia Ltd. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

What is known about the topic?

- Nurses participate in disaster response and recovery. However, the nurses' roles in the out-of-hospital disaster environment is not well understood.
- Most accounts of nursing in disasters are descriptive or anecdotal and lack detail about the role undertaken by nurses.

What this paper adds or contributes?

- The nurses' role in providing health care during and/or following a disaster is more than a clinical care role. It may incorporate psychosocial support, coordination of care and resources, and problem solving.
- Nurses perceive that they have an adequate level of education and clinical experience to perform in an out-of-hospital disaster environment.
- Issues that require further exploration pertain to the provision of resources and the improvisation of resources for nurses that respond to disasters.

Introduction

This research explores the roles of nurses that participated in the response and/or recovery efforts during the Black Saturday and Victorian bushfires in February 2009 as members of St John Ambulance Australia. Historically, Australian nurses have been active participants in response and recovery efforts during national and international disasters.¹ Since the Bali Bombings^{2–4} and the Sumatra–Andaman earthquake and tsunami,^{1,5–8} there has been an increasing amount of the literature describing the health response to disasters. Commonly, these descriptions relate to individual accounts,⁹ disaster medical assistance team experiences,^{1,6} the experiences of field hospital teams¹⁰ or the experience of a hospital response.¹¹ However, our understanding of nurses' roles in disasters is lacking. Similarly, fundamentals that support nurses' roles in disasters are not well understood, and could include nurses' previous disaster experiences, education and training or appropriate resource availability.

A disaster can be defined as an event that interrupts the normal functioning of a community, resulting in the need for external human and/or physical resources to assist. From a health perspective, the above situation could be considered a health-related disaster when the health response required is beyond that of the normal day-to-day operational capacity for that community.¹² The following provides an overview of the literature pertaining to nursing disaster education and

resource provision in disasters. It highlights what is known about the role of nurses in disasters.

Training and education

In the United States, core competencies for nurses in emergencies and disasters have been suggested.¹³ Similarly, the World Health Organization and the International Council of Nurses have developed a set of disaster nursing competencies.¹⁴ These competencies are broad enough to be applied to most nursing contexts and generic enough to be adopted as competencies for nurses within the Australian context. Currently, disaster education for Australian nurses varies in quality and content across health services, organisations, units and education providers.^{15–18} This haphazard approach to disaster education may exist due to the mismatch between our understanding of nurses' roles in disasters and the education that nurses receive pre-disaster response.¹⁷

This was exemplified in a descriptive survey of Australian nurses that responded in an out-of-hospital capacity during the Black Saturday and Victorian bushfires in February 2009. The cohort reported that they had previously participated in mock exercises relating to aviation accidents, major transport accidents, and chemical, biological and radiological emergencies. However, their real-life disaster experiences related to bushfires and other extreme weather events rather than the emergencies that were the focus of mock or drill disaster exercises.¹⁷ Others have questioned the appropriateness and relevance of disaster-related education, particularly for emergency nurses in South Australia.¹⁶ As such, the development of a national disaster education and training framework for the Australian context is required;¹⁹ one that reflects the realities of the context in which nurses will be utilised during disasters.

Resources

There is little published literature pertaining to resource provision and requirements in the health response to disasters; the paucity of literature that does exist is commonly embedded within other key topics. The literature superficially describes the consequences of infrastructure damage and the improvisation of nurses to provide clinical care. Following the Haitian earthquake [2009] a number of resource issues were identified relating to transport infrastructure, including congestion due to the arrival of aid and direct damage resulting from the earthquake. The heart of resource issues in Haiti were related to inadequacies in the prioritisation, coordination, storage and accessibility of resources, particularly at major transport hubs.^{20,21}

The Chinese Wenchuan earthquake was a different experience, in which a health response was initiated to assist

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/2606130>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/2606130>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)